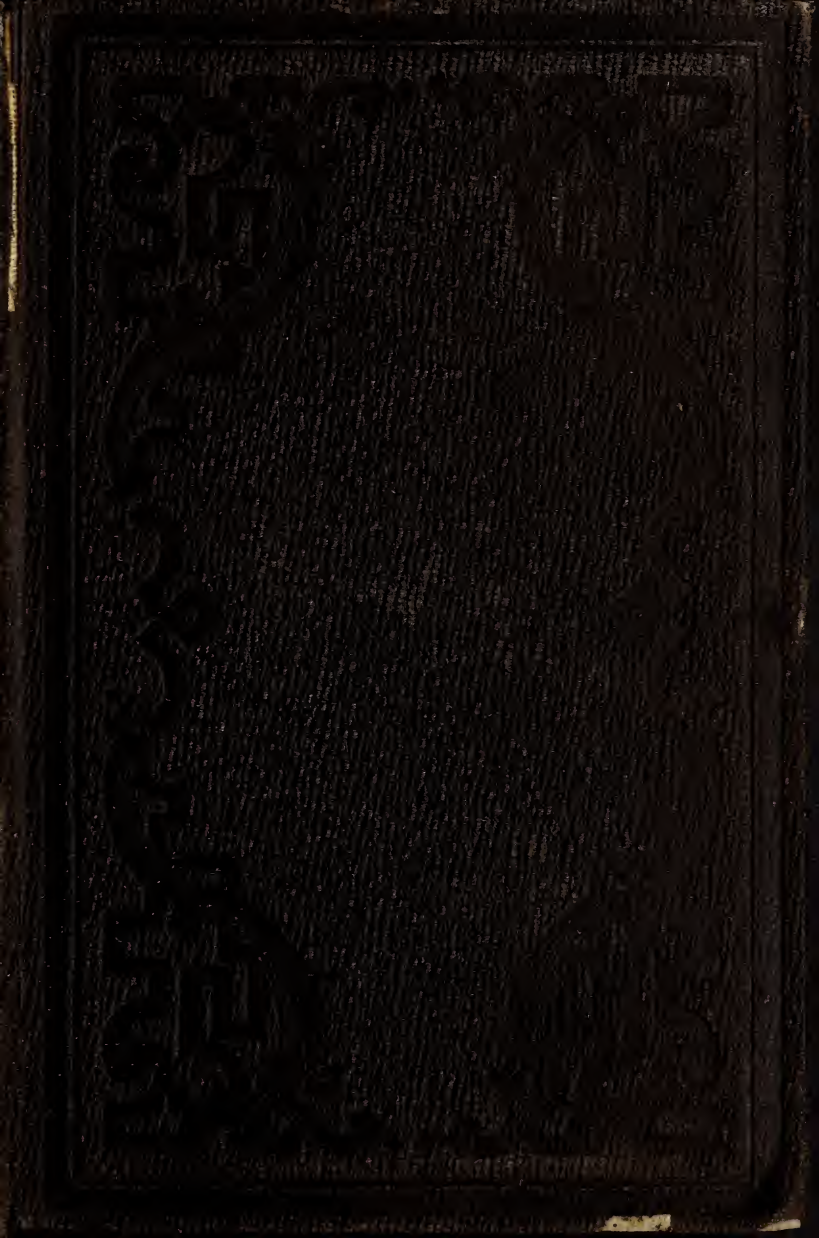




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THE PRESENT STATE, PROSPECTS,

AND

RESPONSIBILITIES

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OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

WITH AN

APPENDIX OF ECCLESIASTICAL STATISTICS.

BY NATHAN BANGS, D.D.

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P R E F A C E.

FROM the time of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost, until the exaltation of Constantine the Great, in the beginning of the fourth century, to the imperial government, Christianity had been rapidly winning its way in the midst of violent oppositions, and sometimes of cruel persecutions, until it finally established itself in the heart of the Roman Empire. From that inauspicious period it gradually lost much of its vital principles, by accommodating itself to the maxims of the world, and paying obeisance to civil rulers, and seeking to shape itself according to the political views of men invested with temporal power. It continued its retrograde motion until finally it degenerated into a "strange plant," nourished in a corrupted soil. Twelve centuries of midnight darkness brooded over the Church, and so beclouded the Sun of Righteousness that his rays were scarcely perceptible, and even the stars of the firmament gave but a twinkling light, to direct the weary pilgrim in the path to life and immortality.

We may presume, it is true, that during this long night of darkness, here and there were found pious souls, breathing out their desires to God, while they mourned over the general desolations which overspread the Church,

for pure and undefiled religion among men. But they were so few and far between, that their names scarcely appear upon the page of ecclesiastical history. Monkish superstition, bodily austerities, and a vain attempt to discipline the mind to the rules of piety, by fasting, prayers, pilgrimages, the collection and worship of relics, founding monasteries and nunneries, were substituted for that heartfelt piety consisting in pure love to God and man, by which the primitive Christians were distinguished.

God, however, had not wholly forsaken the world; for had he done so, it would have perished in the tomb of its own corruptions. In addition to the few sighing ones to whom we have already alluded, arose, in the fifteenth century, in Bohemia, *John Huss*, an eloquent and learned man, who preached vehemently against the vices of the clergy. But his light was soon extinguished by the fury of his enemies. Nor did *John Wiclif*, who arose in England a little before Huss, and strove to revive the flame of pure religion, share a better fate; for though he died a natural death, yet his enemies persecuted him while living, and, after his death, displayed their malice at this bold reprovcr, by causing his bones to be dug up and publicly burned. To complete their malignant projects, they finally inflicted the sentence of death upon *Jerome* of Prague, the companion of Huss, who was committed to the flames on the 14th of May, 1416.

But these acts of cruelty could not wholly extinguish the flame of pure love which began to be enkindled in

the hearts of a few; for soon after, namely, in 1517, God raised up *Luther* in Germany, to stem the torrent of iniquity, and to open the pure fountain of divine truth and love. The events of the Reformation, brought about through the instrumentality of Luther, Melancthon, and others, in Germany; of Arminius and his compeers in Holland; of Cranmer and his associates in England; of Knox and his coadjutors in Scotland; of Zwingli and his followers in Switzerland, are all well known, and therefore need not be rehearsed here. But, alas for the glory of the Church! These lights were extinguished by death, and their followers soon sunk away into a dead formalism; so that the whole Protestant world, with but few exceptions, became wedded to the State, and thus imitated the conduct of the Church in the days of Constantine. The peculiar glories of Christianity were obscured by the smoke and dust of political strife, and by the pride and ostentation of the dignitaries of the Church.

In this state lay the religious world when WESLEY arose, and preached anew the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and holiness of heart and life. What he did—the success of his labours, and the holy influence which he was instrumental in producing—I have endeavoured to show in the following chapters. If the positions I have attempted to establish be founded in truth, as I cannot but believe they are, then may we hope and steadfastly believe that God is about to visit the earth with a more copious shower of divine grace than it has ever heretofore witnessed. I

would not indeed deceive myself, nor mislead my readers; but if it be a fact, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that almost all denominations of Protestant Christians are waking up to the vast importance of vital godliness, of the absolute necessity of holiness of heart and life, then have we not reason to believe that Jesus Christ is about to take to Himself his great power, and reign universal King upon the earth?

That this grand consummation may be fully realized, those members of the Christian Churches, who can behold the "signs of the times," and who see and feel the necessity of persevering exertions in the cause of evangelical truth, light, and holiness, must unite their energies, and use with conscientious diligence all the appliances within their grasp, for the promotion of the vital cause of Christianity. They must not stop to dispute about non-essentials or minor points of doctrine, modes of church government, or the mere ceremonies of religion, but must unite all their energies, and combine all their influence, to oppose sin and sinful errors, and to establish the kingdom of God, which consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

That this may be the case, is the sincere prayer of the author.

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STATE AND PROSPECTS

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

The state of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Erroneous views—Diminution of Members for three years past allowed—How accounted for—The Millerite delusion—Great increase in 1843 and 1844—Subsequent sifting—The present compared with former diminutions—All this no proof of backsliding—So far from it, that we now have a greater proportion of the population than formerly—All this, cause of gratitude.

MUCH has been written, of late, respecting the state and prospects of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Some, indeed, have lamented over the Church as though they believed it had achieved its mission, or was about to be laid aside for having abused its trust, or misapplied its energies, and was therefore no longer to be an agent in the hand of God in effecting good for the human family. These melancholy conclusions have been drawn from the fact that there has been a diminution in the number of its members for some years past; though, latterly, there has been an encouraging increase, which appears to

be an indication that God is about to visit His heritage again in mercy. I have read these lamentations with a mixture of surprise and regret, believing that the writers have been led astray by their prejudices, or have drawn their conclusions from too superficial or contracted a view of the subject.

The fact, however, is allowed, that there has been a diminution in the number of church-members. In 1845, there was a diminution of 31,763 ; in 1846, 12,343 ; and in 1847, 12,741, making the entire loss, during those three years, 56,847.

Now, in order to see how this loss may affect the vital energies of the Church, we will compare it with the unusually large increase in the years 1843 and 1844.

In 1843, the increase was 154,634. In 1844, the increase was 102,831, making the entire increase for those two years, 257,465. Now, subtract from this number the 56,847, which is the estimated amount of loss for the three years mentioned, and it will leave 200,618, the net increase during those five years. But for the year 1848, there was an increase of 7,508 ; and in 1849, of 23,249, making a net increase for these two years, of 30,757 ; so that the entire increase for the last seven years, after deducting all the losses, is 231,375.

To enable us to account for the diminution during the years 1845, 1846, and 1847, we must take into consideration the circumstances which, it is highly probable, led to the large increase of the two years previous. During those years, and more especially in the year 1843, the minds of the people were greatly excited with the Millerite delusion, under the influence of which thousands of the people were induced to believe that the world was soon to come to an end. In full view of this awful catastrophe, they were led to call on God for mercy, and perhaps most of them were soundly converted to God; while many others became apparently religious, under the influence of an artificial excitement. I say probably most of them were soundly converted to God; for, taking into view the whole of the diminution, it still appears, from the facts above stated, that out of 257,445, the whole number received during the prevalence of that excitement, all but 56,847 have stood fast. The proportion which this loss bears to the gain, is nearly the same as the proportion between the loss of probationers received and the whole number of those probationers; for I believe it is generally allowed, that no more than three-fourths of those who have been received on probation, have graduated to full membership;

and this is about the proportion of those that have been lost during the years above mentioned.

But if this loss is to be taken as a proof of a low state of vital piety in the Church, and that God has forsaken her, what shall we say of other periods, in former days, when a greater proportionate diminution in numbers was witnessed? Thus, in 1778, when there were only 6,095 members in the Church, there was a diminution of 872, which was a loss of about 1 in 7. In 1795, when the whole number of church-members was 60,604, there was a diminution of 6,317, which was a loss of about 1 in 9. In 1845, there was a diminution of 31,769, and the whole number of church-members was 1,139,587, which was a loss of about 1 in 35. So, then, notwithstanding the hue and cry about the want of zeal and skill in the ministry, and the lukewarmness and backsliding of the membership, the proportion of those that were lately lost to the Church was by no means equal to—nay, it was nearly three-fourths less than—that which happened in the years 1778 and 1795; and yet God has been so eminently present with his ministers and people, and has blessed the labour of their hands so abundantly, that the Church has increased in numbers so rapidly, that in 1843 the membership had accumulated

to the amount of 1,068,525 ; and in 1844, 1,171,356 ; and, notwithstanding the diminution since that time, the present number of church-members, including the North and the South, is 1,114,509. So propitiously has the Lord smiled upon us !

There is another point of view in which this subject may be considered, which will afford us equal cause of gratitude to the great Head of the Church. In 1795, our numbers were 60,604, and the number of inhabitants in our country was then estimated at about 4,000,000. This would give to our Church one member for every sixty of the population. Allowing the present population of our country to be 20,000,000, and allowing the number of church-members to be a little over 1,000,000, it will give at least one church-member to every twenty of the population ; so that we have not only increased in the *absolute* number of our church-members, but the *proportionate* number has made a rapid advance upon the population, having become just three times as great now as it was fifty-three years ago. All this, be it remembered, notwithstanding the increase of evangelical preaching, zeal, and efficiency, in other denominations, in the midst of whom we have been labouring.

Instead, therefore, of lamenting over our deficiency—although God knows we have faults enough to humble us in the dust—we have abundant cause of gratitude to the great Head of the Church for the merciful manner in which he has favoured our feeble, though, I trust, sincere endeavours to advance his cause upon the earth.

CHAPTER II.

Decrease but temporary—Its causes—Disputes between the North and South—The Mexican War—Compared with the War of 1813–1815—Like results produced—The abolition excitement—The fact, therefore, of a diminution in numbers no proof of a departure from vital piety—On the contrary, we have evidence of improvement.

It may be said by some, that the great increase in the membership in 1843 and 1844, should have been followed by a proportionate increase for the following year, in order to prove that the Church has not deteriorated in her piety, or become lax in her appliances for the salvation of men. To this I answer, that allowing this should have been the case, such a conclusion by no means follows, as the diminution may have originated from other causes, and causes too beyond the reach of human control, at least so far as the Church, in her collective capacity, is

concerned ; and whatever the causes may have been, I humbly trust they were but temporary in their character, for it seems that already the Lord is visiting his heritage again with the reviving influences of his Spirit, as there was an increase, in 1848, of upwards of 7,000 ; and in 1849, of 23,240, making an increase for the two past years of upwards of 30,000. Though it might be expected, that after such an unusual ingathering of souls in the two years above mentioned, namely, upwards of 256,000, under the impulses produced by such causes as were then at work, all, to be sure, under the management of Him, who made them subservient to His purposes of love to the human family, yet there were other causes at work during the years 1845, 1846, and 1847, which may be assigned as a reason for the diminution, without supposing that any permanent departure from our ancient landmarks, either in doctrine, discipline, or practical piety, had taken place.

In the first place, the disputes between the North and the South, during that ominous period, no doubt had a deleterious influence upon the interests of true religion. These disputes, in the manner in which they were conducted, certainly had a tendency to impair Christian confidence in one another, and thus to unfit the

mind of believers for close communion with God. But as this unhappy state of things is now subsiding, and personal recriminations, so disgraceful to the parties concerned, are giving place to a return of brotherly love and mutual confidence, I would touch upon this subject lightly, and would not, indeed, have alluded to it at all, were it not necessary to account for this temporary depression of the Church. How far these things may have affected us, more particularly here in the northern department of the Church, it may be difficult to tell; but it is a truth which cannot be disputed, that we have suffered a greater diminution in church-members than they have in the South, if indeed they have suffered any at all, for I believe they have had a steady, though, comparatively, a small increase. But leaving this part of the subject with this slight allusion to it—for I have no wish to revive those heart-burnings which, I trust, are now nearly extinguished—I would remark in the

Second place, that the war-spirit which pervaded our land during the years above mentioned, no doubt contributed its full share toward the result we here deprecate. This spirit has always been found exceedingly unfriendly to the diffusion of pure and undefiled religion; for the spirit and practice of war, and the spirit and

practice of piety, are generally incompatible with each other, and cannot, therefore, long co-exist in the same person. In 1814, during the war between this country and Great Britain, when the total number of our church-members was 211,129, (not as many as was our increase in 1843 and 1844,) our decrease was 3,178, which was one to about sixty-five, more than half the proportionate decrease of 1846; and had the like causes existed at that time as above mentioned in the latter case, the like result might have been witnessed; and as, in the former instance, the injurious effects were but temporary, and ceased with the cause which produced them, so, I humbly trust, as the war with Mexico has now happily ended, the spirit of piety will resume its wonted tone, and revivals of religion will again pervade our land, as indeed they have already begun to do.

In 1836, there was a decrease of 2,283. This was during the abolition excitement, which produced agitations and disputes similar to those which arose at a later period, between the North and the South, and had a like injurious influence upon the interests of pure religion, and finally ended in a small secession. These sad effects, however, disappeared with the cause which produced them, and God afterwards visited the

Church with one of the most remarkable revivals of religion ever witnessed in our country. And may we not hope that when the bickerings above alluded to shall have entirely ceased, and God's ministers and people shall give themselves wholly up to his work, and strive together for the promotion of his cause, a like heavenly influence will be felt throughout all our borders?

Notwithstanding the disastrous results we have been considering in the diminution of church-members, though it may not be—and indeed is not, as I believe—an undeniable proof of a diminution of piety, the fact itself has been overruled for our good. It has tended to humble us, has led to heart-searchings, to a thorough examination of ourselves, and has induced us to investigate the causes of this seeming declension; and as far as they have been ascertained, to remove them out of the way; and likewise to excite a spirit of fervent prayer and renewed diligence, that God may be pleased to pour out his Spirit, and revive and spread his work among the people.

It will be perceived that while the fact is allowed—as indeed it cannot be controverted—that there has been a diminution of church-members, and some of the supposed causes have been detected and pointed out, yet it is believed

that these causes are but temporary in their character, and might, indeed, have been avoided, had prudent measures been adopted ; and that, therefore, they do not prove that there has been, on the whole, any essential deterioration in the Church, any departure from her primitive doctrine or discipline, or in the general spirit and practice of piety, either among the preachers or people : on the contrary, I believe it is susceptible of substantial proof, that by a comparison of the last twenty or thirty years, with any former period of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it will be found that there has been most manifest improvement in almost every respect—improvements of a highly beneficial character—of a character highly beneficial to the best interests of mankind—temporal, intellectual, spiritual, and eternal interests !

This opinion involves topics too numerous to be discussed in this chapter, and will require a statement of facts too numerous to be spread out in a narrow space ; and they will, therefore, be taken up in subsequent chapters, together with such arguments as may be considered necessary to sustain the opinion above expressed.

CHAPTER III.

Evils allowed to exist—These are exceptions—The majority truly pious—Evidences of improvement—Temporally in wealth—In church building—Comparison between our present and former state in this respect.

I HAVE said that, comparing the present state of the Church, or its state for twenty or thirty years past, with any former period, there has been a manifest improvement in almost every respect. This assertion I shall now endeavour to demonstrate. Let no one suppose, however, that I am so blind to the existence of facts, as not to admit that there are, and have been, evils among us—that there are individuals, both preachers and people, who are not as they ought to be—who are proud, vain, and criminally selfish—that such seek their own glory instead of the glory of the Lord Jesus; and that others have disgraced themselves and the cause they had espoused by gross apostasies; but, I would ask, at what period of our history have not these evils existed? Those who are acquainted with our early history, know full well that obstinate heretics sprang up at that time—that some, even among the early preachers, became gross apostates, and thus disgraced themselves and their brethren by their evil deeds. I have been

acquainted with Methodism for about forty-nine years, and I think I may say in truth, that I knew as many, if indeed not more, in the early days of my experience, in proportion to their number, that were not as they ought to have been, both among preachers and people, as may be seen now. We were always troubled, more or less, with uneasy spirits—with mercenary men and women—with disgusting egotists, whose vanity betrayed the emptiness of their brains, whose ignorance made them invincible to the impressions of truth, and whose selfishness obtruded itself into every society in which they appeared ; with backsliders, hypocrites, and apostates, whose vices were ultimately exhibited to the view of all with whom they became acquainted—and with covetous, mercenary beings, who gave evidence they loved their gold (if they were so fortunate as to have any, and, if not, by their repinings at those who had it) better than their God—I say these evil-minded persons always were found among us, are among us still, and I suppose always will be ; but I do not believe that they are more numerous now, in proportion to our numbers, than they were in any former period, if indeed they are as much so.

But these are exceptions—mortifying exceptions, it is true—to the general character of the

Methodists. I firmly believe that the great majority of our church-members, including ministers and people, and I have had a pretty good opportunity of knowing them, have been sincerely devoted to God, have been actuated by the purest motives, have felt the love of God and man to be the ruling principle of their hearts, the evidence of which has been furnished by the rectitude of their conduct;—they have proved that they *loved God by keeping his commandments*. This belief is founded upon an intimate acquaintance with them for about fifty years, during which time I have had an opportunity of familiarizing myself with ministers and people, from the highest order in the ministry to the lowest—bishops, elders, deacons, and preachers, and the various official members of the Church, trustees, stewards, and class-leaders, as well as the more private members—having transacted business with them, mingled in their councils, in conferences, quarterly, annual, and general, attended class-meetings, and the various other means of grace; and from this intimate knowledge of all the affairs of the Church, I certainly have had a favourable opportunity of judging of their motives, so far as motives may be ascertained from words and actions; and from all these sources of informa-

tion, I am led to the conclusion that, whatever may be said of certain individuals, whose character may be considered somewhat dubious, the great majority are as before described.

These things being premised,—and they have been mentioned to prevent any one from supposing that I am either so blind as not to see faults, or so obstinate as not to admit them,—I proceed to state some of the evidences of our improvement.

We have improved temporally. The most of those who embraced Methodism in its early days were among the poorer class of society. In consequence of their embracing the religion of the Lord Jesus—and this is what I understand by their becoming Methodists—they have become sober, industrious, frugal in their manner of living, and thus many have become wealthy; others are in comfortable and thriving circumstances; while comparatively few are suffering from poverty, but most of them are reaping the fruits of honest industry. And let no one suppose that temporal good is not one of the blessings of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did not Jesus Christ present this among the motives to induce the people to enter His service? “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these

things shall be added unto you,”—that is, all those temporal blessings of which he had been speaking. And did not the Saviour say to Peter, in answer to his interrogatory, what he should receive who had left all for Christ’s sake,—“No man that hath left houses, or lands, wife,” &c., “but he shall receive an hundred fold in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting?” Thus “godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” So far, therefore, from worldly prosperity being a mark of ungodliness, it is enumerated by the Lord Jesus himself, and included by his apostles, among the blessings of God’s kingdom; and many have experienced the fulfilment of the promise, by receiving even a hundred-fold in this life for the small sacrifice they were induced to make for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. The danger is, of so setting their hearts upon riches as to make them their principal treasure, and neglecting to become rich toward God, by dispensing abroad, clothing the naked, feeding the poor, and making the hearts of the widow and fatherless to rejoice, and thus laying by a “good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Whether or not the Methodists have done

this, and are still doing it, according to their ability, let us inquire what they have done, and are still doing, to advance the cause of Christ. In the first place, they have much improved in church building. Those who have been acquainted with our circuits and stations for twenty, thirty, and forty years past, and who can compare our houses of worship then with what they are now, will be struck with the contrast, and will praise God for the improvement in this respect. In former days, most of the preaching-places, more particularly in the country villages and settlements, were private houses, school-houses, barns, and groves ; even when a church edifice was erected, a site was generally selected in some obscure retreat, remote from the centre of population, as though the Methodists were ashamed to be seen and heard by their neighbours ; and even this small edifice was frequently but half finished, and left to fall down under its own rottenness. In this respect there is a mighty improvement, such an improvement as must be encouraging to the hearts of all God's people. Now there are large and commodious houses of worship, not only in our populous cities—where indeed many have been recently rebuilt or enlarged, and their number increased with the advancing population,—but in almost every village

and considerable settlement throughout the country are found temples finished in a neat, plain style, in which the pure word of God is preached, and his ordinances duly administered. How has this been accomplished? Very few of the rich men of this world have come to our aid. The Methodist people, with their limited means, aided, to be sure, by a few of their more wealthy brethren, have done this, and they have done it with a liberality and enterprise worthy of all praise, and they ought, most assuredly, to have credit for the commendable zeal they have thus exemplified in the cause of God. It is true that some of these houses are deeply in debt; but the brethren are using means to liquidate their debts, and I humbly trust that, by the blessing of God on their pious efforts, they will not only succeed in paying for those already built, but that they will go forward, and erect still more, as the increasing population of the country and the Church shall demand.

CHAPTER IV.

Education another evidence of improvement—Wesley's work in this cause—Efforts of Coke and Asbury in this cause failed—Effect of this failure disparaging—Recent efforts more successful—Some opposed to this cause—But God has sanctioned it—Truly Wesleyan—The Methodists have done much to their credit—Who will say that this is no evidence of improvement?

ANOTHER evidence of the improvement of the Church is, the revival and diffusion of the spirit and practice of education. We know that it was a favourite object of Mr. Wesley to provide for the education of the youth, not only in piety, but also in literature and science. Hence the early establishment of the Kingswood school; and his followers have added another since his death, and have likewise established two theological schools, for the training and education of such young men in the local ministry as are on the reserve-list, in scientific and theological knowledge, that they may thereby become better qualified to instruct others.

At the organization of our Church in this country, in 1784, Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury submitted a plan to the Conference for the establishment of a college. Of this the Conference approved, and it was speedily carried into execution; the college buildings were erected, and

the school went into operation under favourable circumstances, and continued to prosper for about ten years, when the whole was consumed by fire. A second one soon after shared the same fate. These disastrous occurrences discouraged the friends of education, and prevented any efforts from being put forth in this cause, except some ineffectual ones in favour of district-schools, for upwards of twenty years; and, indeed, such was the apathy manifested on this subject, that Methodist preachers were accused, not without some show of reason, of being enemies of literature and science. Though this was not true in its application to all concerned, yet it must be confessed that there was too much ground for the taunt against the great body, if we may judge of the disposition of the heart by the actions of the life.

But, whatever may be conceded to this mortifying objection, for upwards of twenty years past the Church has evinced a disposition to redeem herself from the reproach, by exerting her energies to establish academies and colleges in different parts of her jurisdiction. The first successful effort in this cause was made in New-England, in 1817, by the founding of the New-market Academy; the next, in the city of New-York, in 1819, by the establishment of the

Wesleyan Seminary. The first college which obtained a permanence was the Augusta College, located in the town of Augusta, State of Kentucky, in 1823. In 1831 the Wesleyan University was founded, and two others, namely, Randolph Macon and La Grange.

The commencement of these academies and colleges seemed to beget a general desire, throughout the bounds of the several annual conferences, to embark in the cause of education; and so widely has this desire been diffused, and so deeply has it descended into the heart of the Church, that there have been established, and are now in successful operation, between thirty and forty academies, and fourteen collegiate institutions, including the North and South; besides a number of other academies, which are so far patronized by the conferences that they appoint boards of visitors, and recommend them to the patronage of our people. Here then is an improvement of vast importance to the character, permanence, and prosperity of the Church.

I am aware that there are those among us who look upon these literary institutions with a jealous eye, while others treat them with cold indifference, and some few, perhaps, with hostility. But I am happy to believe that the

great majority of the most influential, both among preachers and people, hail this improvement as ominous of good to the Church. I have indeed regretted to see this subject—the subject of education—treated with a sarcastic sneer by an aged writer, as though it was the offspring of pride and vanity, indicative of a degenerate state of the Church. It is believed, however, that such a sentiment has but few sympathizers, and that the prevailing spirit of the age, and the pious efforts of God's servants, will ultimately sweep away all these objections, and put to shame the cavilling caricatures of those who attempt to hold up to ridicule these nurseries of learning and religion.

That God has sanctioned them, is abundantly manifest from the powerful revivals of religion which have prevailed at different times among the students. I presume to say that God has visited them as often, and as powerfully, with the reviving influences of his Spirit, as he has any other places, even the churches which are under the stated ministry of the word and ordinances of the Gospel. Hence, young men have been raised up, not only endowed with human learning, but also deeply imbued with the spirit of their divine Master, and have gone forth as flaming heralds of the Gospel of the Son of

God ; and from the colleges have issued men competent to teach in the academies, and other colleges, and are now acting as professors, principals, or presidents of other institutions of learning. Who, then, will dare to lift up his voice against these nurseries of learning and religion? No true son of Wesley, surely. He who was so much indebted for his celebrity to the learning he acquired at Oxford, who strove so assiduously to promote it among his preachers and people, (see his "Address to the Clergy,") would be ashamed to acknowledge any man as his genuine follower, who is an enemy to those institutions which are designed to diffuse the blessings of literature and religion among the youth of our land, and more especially to such as have been so eminently sanctioned by the great Head of the Church as ours have been.

Now, who have founded these institutions? The answer is, The Methodists have done it. For though some generous-minded individuals not connected with our Church have made liberal donations, and some of the States in which they are located have made small appropriations for their support, yet the greater proportion of the money which has been received for this purpose has been drawn from the pockets

of our people. And here we see one of the many benefits resulting from the temporal good with which God has blessed them. Had they not embraced religion, they might have lived and died in poverty ; but in consequence of their having done so, by cutting off all needless expense, by being sober and industrious, they have become wealthy, and have money to spare for pious and benevolent purposes ; and here is an outlet for their surplus wealth, where they may bestow their goods for the benefit of themselves and their posterity.

I do not say that our more wealthy friends have given to these institutions all that they might and should ; but for what they have done, and are doing in this important cause, they have our thanks : and when they shall fully feel how much they themselves are indebted to Methodism for what they are, and for what they possess, and more especially for those literary institutions, for which their bounty is solicited, they will come forward with liberality to place our colleges beyond the danger of pecuniary embarrassments.

In the face of these facts, who will say that we have made no improvement within twenty or thirty years past ? Those who believe that all this has sprung from pride and vanity, will, of course, mourn over it as a calamity—as an

infallible mark of our degeneracy ; while those who believe, as I do, that it has arisen from the spirit of true piety, from an enlarged desire to do good, and to advance the present and eternal interests of men, will account it as an evidence of improvement, and bless God “for the consolation.”

CHAPTER V.

The Missionary cause an evidence of improvement—Origin of the Missionary Society—Opposition encountered—Feebleness of its beginning—Gradually advanced—Finally triumphs—What it has achieved—All this a practical demonstration of improvement.

A FOURTH evidence of the improvement which this Church has made, within twenty or thirty years past, is to be found in her Missionary department. I do not mean by this that she lacked the missionary spirit in former days, for indeed her ministry was always a missionary ministry, always aggressive in its operations, making, by its energetic labours, inroads upon the territories of Satan. Among modern missionaries, none equalled John Wesley, either in the amount, extent, or success of his ministerial labours. His sons in the Gospel imbibed his spirit, and imitated his example, preaching the

Gospel of the kingdom, to the utmost extent of their abilities, to "every nation and kindred on the earth." It was this spirit that brought them to this country, and the fire which they kindled up here burned so intensely in the hearts of those missionaries and their successors, that it impelled them on in their work, until they stretched themselves over the extended settlements of this continent, visiting almost every city, village, and settlement, even to the remotest log hut in the wilderness. But still there were many intervening places to be filled up, many new settlements to be supplied, many an Indian tribe to be evangelized, and many a heathen nation to be converted to Christianity.

Over these desolations the more pious and enlightened portions of the Church cast a pitying eye, and sent up a prayer to God for their salvation. On looking back upon the history of our Church, and seeing what she had done; on looking forward and around, and seeing what was yet to be done, and considering at the same time her capabilities, both temporally and spiritually, of doing much more than she had done for the salvation of the world; excited to action by a few benevolent spirits, she determined to put forth her energies to "extend her missionary labours throughout the United States and else-

where." This gave rise to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Considering the state of piety in the Church at that time, one would be surprised at the objections which were made, even by men of unquestionable goodness, against the formation of this society—some impugning the motives of its originators, others ranking it among visionary schemes, and not a few lamenting over it, as calculated to weaken, if not indeed to sap the foundations of the itinerancy. The friends of the measure, however, were so conscious of the purity of their motives, and the rectitude of their conduct, that they persevered in their work, not stopping to answer objections, looking to God for aid and direction, fully believing that He would sanction, and of course prosper, their undertaking.

The event has justified their anticipations. Never has a cause been more blessed than the Missionary cause. Its commencement, to be sure, was feeble. Though it was recognized by the General Conference, which convened a year after its formation, namely, in 1820, yet the amount collected the first year was only \$823 04, and the amount expended \$85 76. The next year there was reported as having been received \$2,328 76, and expended \$407 87. It seemed more difficult to expend than to collect the

money, though the collections were sufficiently small; so difficult indeed was it to diffuse the missionary spirit among the preachers and people, that our bishops were fearful of selecting and appointing missionaries, lest they should seem to trespass upon the funds of the Church. This apathy, however, did not originate from any want of zeal in the cause of God, nor from any lack of piety in the heads, or in the Church generally, but chiefly from too scrupulous a regard for the other interests of the Church, and a fear of appropriating money unconstitutionally. To remove these scruples, and to obviate these objections, I remember perfectly well that the Board of Managers appointed a committee to correspond with the bishops, the object of which was to induce them to appoint missionaries, and to draw the funds for their support.

But the cause gradually advanced—so slowly, however, that from 1819 to 1832, there was a balance reported in the treasury each year, notwithstanding the greatest amount received for any one year was only \$14,176 11. In 1832 the Liberia Mission was commenced, and from that time a new spring seemed to be given to the Missionary cause, for the funds have gradually increased, and the fields of labour have enlarged, until in 1839, when the available funds

amounted to \$139,521 94 ; and in 1840 there were expended \$146,498 58, which I believe were the largest amounts ever received and expended in any one year.

Though after this there was a falling off, for a short time, it may be accounted for without supposing any dereliction of evangelical piety and zeal in the Church, as is manifest from the fact that latterly the spirit of liberality has expanded ; so much so, that the amount received in 1848, including the North and South, was \$144,223 66, which is \$4,701 62 more than had been received for any previous year ; which, though not in proportion to the increase of numbers and wealth, shows that the missionary spirit is rising among us. This, together with the enlargement of the missionary field, particularly in China and California, is an encouraging omen, and should serve as a memento of the goodness of God.

Now let us see what this Society has done, not merely in raising money, and supporting men, but in awakening and converting sinners. I presume to say that in this latter work it has far outstripped every other Missionary Society in existence. Let any one read its history, follow its missionaries, and look at the evidences—most manifest and palpable evidences—of the

conversion of souls, among the aborigines of our country, the slave population of the South, in the new States and Territories of the West, and among the Germans, as well as in Liberia and South America—though in this last place I grant but little comparatively has been done—and he will be convinced that God has given his sanction to this Society in a most eminent degree. During the thirty-one years of its existence, notwithstanding its feebleness for about thirteen years of its infancy—though during that period its friends marked with pleasure its gradual growth, and perceived signs of health and vigour which promised the future strength of its manhood—I presume that it has been instrumental of bringing upwards of 60,000 souls into the bosom of the Church, directly, besides its benign influence in its indirect action in stirring up the spirit of prayer, in diffusing a spirit of liberality, and laying a foundation for the future growth and prosperity of the cause of God in places where it first planted the Gospel, and has since left them to be provided for in the more regular way; for it has always been the policy of this Society, as soon as any place became able to support itself, to withdraw its pecuniary aid, and confine itself to more new and destitute places.

Here is another evidence of improvement ; and if the missionary spirit enters into the very essence of the Gospel, and unfolds it in all its loveliness, and displays it in all its energies—as it undoubtedly does—then is the manifestation of this spirit a practical demonstration of an improved state of piety in the Church. Here, also, is another outlet for the surplus wealth of our people, in the application of which they may make it tell on the eternal destinies of immortal beings. Instead of hoarding it up for those who may come after them—and they know not whether they shall be wise men or fools—let them deposit it, at least a suitable proportion of it, in this treasury of the Lord, and when he shall come in judgment, he will reward them accordingly.

CHAPTER VI.

Home missions—Their blessed effects—Other benevolent movements—Increased number of books another evidence of improvement—Origin of the Book-Concern—Its feebleness—Labours under a heavy debt—No American writers—Its income small—Its present prosperous state—This institution has been sustained by Methodists.

IN addition to the general field of missionary labour, the Home Missions ought not to be overlooked. These have sprung up within six

or seven years past, and have exerted a powerful and salutary influence wherever they have operated. I know not, indeed, how many of these exist; but I know they have one in Baltimore, another in New-York, and another in Brooklyn, and perhaps also in some other places. They have been instrumental in enlarging the work in the destitute portions of the cities, and have built several new churches. The one in the city of Brooklyn, which was commenced in 1847, has built one new church, and paid for it, enlarged another, and has been instrumental in bringing between one and two hundred sinners from darkness to light. This has been effected chiefly by Christian women, belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church in that city; and all this has been done by the several churches, in addition to the support of the stationed preachers, and contributing their proportion to the general missionary cause, and other incidental expenses of the Church. And had I the statistics of the other Home Missionary Societies, I have no doubt but that I could state a like encouraging result. Is this no improvement? no evidence of an increase of pious zeal in the cause of God? Let those who look on with cold indifference, and consume themselves in complaining of the degeneracy of the age, and

whine over the desolations of the Church, arouse themselves from their lethargy, enter into the spirit and practice of this holy cause, and they will soon see a different state of things, and find their own hearts warming with love to God and the souls of men ; and likewise feel a glowing gratitude to God for what he has done, and is still doing, for the souls and bodies of mankind.

There are various other benevolent movements which might be mentioned, some of which have been in existence from the beginning of the Church ; such as love-feasts, and sacramental collections for the poor ; others have been formed more recently, and are therefore evidence of an improvement ; such as associations in individual churches for visiting the sick, providing food and clothing for the needy : all of which are the genuine fruits of that expansive benevolence which the Gospel inspires in the hearts of all true believers. These, however, are only mentioned by the way, not, indeed, because they are insignificant in themselves—for they are the genuine offspring of that religion which Jesus Christ imparts to all his followers—but because they do not belong so generally to the whole Church.

The next thing I would bring forward more

prominently, as an evidence of intellectual improvement, is the increased number of our publications. We commenced our Book-Concern as early as 1789 ; its beginning was small, and its progress exceedingly slow. This, to be sure, might have been expected, from the infancy of the Church, and the want of capital to set up with—of facilities for printing and circulating books. Yet these circumstances could not justify the apathy on this subject ; for so little zeal was displayed in favour of printing and circulating books, that in the year 1813, there were only twenty-four different publications on sale at the Book-Room ; and one of these, Coke's Commentary, was imported from England. Leaving this out of the account, a copy of each work published might be purchased for \$29 75 ; and among these were but three American publications, namely, Abbott's and Watters' Life, and the Scriptural Catechism. All the rest were reprints of books manufactured in England. And such was the lack of zeal in this cause, that though the General Conference, in 1812, in the midst of opposition from several delegates—for I distinctly remember all these things—ordered a resumption of the Magazine, and appointed committees to collect materials for a history of our Church, yet nothing was done in either one

case or the other. No Magazine was published until two years after the next General Conference, in 1816, nor any materials collected for a history. And such was the languishing state of this Concern, that it was in danger of sinking under its own weight; no new publications of any consequence were added; but only the same books were reprinted, so that its debts were accumulating, without any adequate means to liquidate them; and it would, in all probability, have become bankrupt, and have gone down, to the disgrace of the Church, had not new means been used to invigorate its energies, and to expand its capacities. This was done by adding to the list of its publications, by resuming the Magazine, by purchasing Clarke's Commentary, by setting up a bindery and printing-office, by altering the plan of selling the books, and by establishing weekly periodicals; and, finally, by enlisting the talents of our preachers in the art of writing for the public.

During the dark days I have been reviewing, we had scarcely a single writer on this side of the water, who dared to put his pen to paper. Excepting the Scriptural Catechism by the Rev. John Dickens—a most estimable man—Garrettson's, Abbott's, and Watters' Lives, and a few pieces which had appeared in the Armi-

nian Magazine in 1789 and 1790, not an American publication appeared, unless now and then a straggling pamphlet, which hardly breathed the breath of life, and the most of which, as Hume said of one of his Essays, "fell still-born from the press." This was the general state of things for about thirty years, namely, from 1789 to 1818, when new life began to be infused into our press, and it has been gradually growing and improving from that day to this.

During these periods, though for the most of the time there were but seven annual conferences, the Book-Concern never paid over \$300 a year to each conference, and sometimes not over \$150, and even this came out of borrowed money; for, as I have before said, the Concern was so deeply in debt, though it was not generally known at the time, that it was in danger of sinking under its own weight, as it indeed commenced its business on borrowed capital. Those who now manage its affairs know but little of the difficulties with which it had to contend, particularly from 1812 to 1824, during all which time it was struggling for its existence, though during the latter part of the time it was adopting measures which its managers were fully confident would ultimately put it upon a permanent foundation, which indeed proved to be the fact.

What is its present state? On looking over its catalogue of books, I find, if I have counted accurately, no less than 236 different publications, small and great, among which are Clarke's, Benson's, Wesley's, and Watson's Commentaries, Bibles and Testaments, and almost every species of literature, on theological, historical, and biographical subjects, as well as experimental and practical piety. To furnish one's self with a copy of each of these will cost, at the retail price, between \$200 and \$300. Now compare this with the publications in 1813, when there were only 23 several books, the cost of a copy of each of which was only about \$29, and then reflect that the average price is nearly one-half less now than then. Are here no signs of improvement?

In addition to these, look at the list of Tracts, amounting to upwards of 360, of from 4 to 60 pages each, besides a Sunday-school library, and books for Sunday-school scholars. There are also published, including the North and South, two Quarterly Reviews, one monthly, seven weekly papers, a Sunday-School Advocate, and a Missionary Advocate; and as to writers, there is no comparison between the present and former periods of the Church.

But has it increased in its available funds? It

has. After liquidating all its debts, purchasing lots, erecting buildings, &c. ; and notwithstanding the conferences have increased from seven to twenty-eight, excluding the Southern portion, but, including that, to forty-one, it paid, in 1848, \$400 to each, making an aggregate of \$9,200 for the twenty-eight conferences, or of \$16,400 for the forty-one ; whereas, in the former days, when it paid \$300 to each conference, when there were but seven, the whole amount was \$2,100 ; or when it paid only \$150, as it sometimes did, it amounted to no more than \$1,050.

Now who have sustained this institution ? The answer is, The Methodists have done it. I think therefore that here is substantial evidence of improvement, such an improvement as ought to fill our hearts with gratitude to God, and make us praise him for all his benefits.

CHAPTER VII.

Examination of doctrine—In what Methodism consists—Its peculiarities—Sanctification—Mr. Wesley's views of this doctrine—This doctrine continues to be preached—There is therefore no deterioration here.

WE have hitherto surveyed the Church in her external features, counted her numbers, estimated the value, so far as we were able, of her improvements in temporal and intellectual acquirements; and if I have not, actuated by too strong a bias in her favour, very much mistaken her present condition, she is greatly improved in these respects. That she has rapidly increased in numbers, notwithstanding the diminution in 1845, 1846, and 1847, is unquestionable. But this of itself, I allow, is no proof of an increase of spiritual strength, nor, consequently, of real piety; for were we as numerous as the sands upon the sea-shore, yet, destitute of solid piety, we should be none the better, nor could we furnish any substantial evidence that God sanctions our labours. Dismissing, therefore, these calculations, let us inquire whether there be any evidence of a deterioration in doctrine, or in experimental and practical piety? That we may judge accurately upon this subject, it is necessary to ascertain what those doctrines are

which were first promulgated by Mr. Wesley and his followers, and what is the standard or measure of experimental and practical piety by which they were distinguished. In surveying these, however, we need not dwell upon those which are common among all orthodox Christians—such as, the being and existence of God ; the primeval perfection of the universe ; the original purity of man, his fall, and consequent depravity of himself and of his offspring ; the Deity, incarnation, and atonement of Christ ; the necessity of repentance ; justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ ; the resurrection of the dead ; the final judgment, and its momentous consequences. These great cardinal truths of God our Saviour are common to all orthodox Christians, and therefore contain nothing to distinguish us from them, or to distinguish one denomination from another. Nor will I say, as a writer has recently said, that “Methodism is religion without philosophy,” (see Appendix, No. 1,) lest I should seem to insinuate, either that true religion and philosophy cannot coexist, or that religion was always poisoned by philosophy until Methodism arose to separate the foreign and poisonous admixture therefrom, and thus present the pure, unadulterated balm to the wounded souls of sinners ;

either of which alternatives would be unbecoming a sound divine, or a consistent philosopher.

By Methodism I understand those peculiarities of the system by which it is distinguished from all other *isms*; hence it not only includes the doctrines above enumerated, by which it proves its orthodoxy, but it brings out more prominently than is done by other denominations, and that, as it believes, on the authority of God's word, that of Christian perfection, or the entire sanctification of the whole man to God, or holiness of heart and life; and that this holiness is evinced by a uniform obedience to the commands of God. It holds to the dangerous possibility of apostatizing from the grace of life, and hence urges upon all its disciples the necessity, that they may inherit eternal happiness, of persevering in every good word and work to the end of their probationary existence. And that these doctrines may have as diffusive a spread as possible, it has adopted an itinerant ministry, hereby imitating the apostolic example of preaching the Gospel to "every creature" within its reach: with various other peculiarities, such as class-meetings, love-feasts, &c., for all of which we are ready, when called upon, to give a Scriptural reason. And I know not but

that I should add, the doctrine of the direct witness, and its inseparable results—the fruits of the Spirit; as these, however closely they may be incorporated in their Articles of Faith, and alluded to in their formularies of devotion, are not insisted upon by other denominations, as they should be, in their public instructions, or in the inculcations of the pulpit.

When Mr. Wesley first set out in his Christian career, he made holiness the mark at which he aimed, though he did not then clearly comprehend its nature; but very soon, his eyes being enlightened, he saw that a sinner must be justified by grace through faith before he is sanctified. He accordingly sought and found justification, and then pursued after sanctification or holiness, both internal and external, with all his might, until he found the one to the joy of his heart, and exemplified the other by the righteousness of his life, by “keeping the commandments of God” to the end of his protracted and most laborious days. And never did the pen of Wesley touch upon any subject which it illuminated more clearly, or explained more definitely, explicitly, Scripturally, experimentally, and practically, than it did the doctrine of Christian perfection. To be convinced of this, let any man, who has a tolerable know-

ledge of the subject, or sincerely wishes an accurate knowledge of it, read attentively his sermons, "On Sin in Believers," "The Repentance of Believers," "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God," "On Christian Perfection," and more especially his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," and compare them with the Sacred Scriptures, and he need go no further for light and information, only to God in earnest prayer, that his own heart may be warmed and sanctified by this hallowed flame of Divine love.

Indeed, I consider his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection" the most masterly production upon that subject which ever dropped from an uninspired pen: stating its nature and extent; defining it with nicety and precision; and pointing out the way to attain it; its evidence and fruits, and those infirmities with which it may coexist; in language plain, explicit, and every way suited to the capacity of every reader. I do not wish to undervalue others who have written upon this subject. They all may have their use in attracting attention to it, in inducing penitent believers to seek after it, and in placing it in somewhat new aspects before the reader's understanding; but their twinkling light disappears before that brighter luminary, as the stars

hide themselves when the orb of day mounts the horizon.

The reader will pardon, I trust, this seeming digression from the main topic on which I am writing, for I could hardly refrain from paying a merited tribute to an author who has shed such a flood of light upon a subject so important, so deeply experimental and practical, and so intimately, and perhaps I might say indissolubly, connected with the present peace and future happiness of mankind. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them," or be an occasion of their stumbling. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." These texts of sacred Scripture are quoted to sustain what I had asserted, namely, that the subject of holiness is intimately connected with our present peace and future happiness. The first pronounces present peace to those who *love*, and, of course, *keep* the law ; the second and third show what is necessary to fit us to see the face of God in glory everlasting, namely, *holiness* or *purity* of heart.

Now, have the Methodist preachers ceased to preach this doctrine, and to urge it upon their people as an experimental and practical

thing? I know that they always, from the beginning of their ministry, held it prominently before their hearers, not only as a privilege, but as a duty, to be "holy in all manner of conversation." But did they all profess to enjoy it? They did not: nor did the members of the Church. Some did, both among preachers and people; but I believe a majority did not. Many of the preachers preached it more as a theory, than as something which they knew from their own experience; while all, who were rightly instructed, and were sincere believers in its attainableness, professed to be "groaning after it." This, I believe, has been the general state of the Church from the beginning, though there were "times and seasons," when this work of holiness was more prevalent than at others. I may be under a mistake, but I have thought, and I have drawn my conclusion from reading, and conversation, and attending meetings in various places, that this subject has very considerably revived within six or seven years past; and that a more than usual number have sought and found the blessing of "perfect love." I know, indeed, that there are some crude, unscriptural, anti-Wesleyan notions prevalent on this topic; but I know equally well that there are many, and I believe their numbers are increasing,

deeply devoted souls, both male and female, both among preachers and people, who give evidence of holiness of heart by the holiness of their lives.

I allow that this great and invaluable blessing is not pressed upon the people so generally and so earnestly as its importance demands ; but this is not peculiar to the present time. This lack in the ministry and the membership was always a defect painfully manifest. To be convinced of this, read the works of Wesley, the biographies of the older Methodists, and consult those aged professors now living who can remember the former days, and I believe they will all corroborate the truth of my statement. There is, therefore, I apprehend, no falling off here, no abatement of zeal in the cause of holiness ; but, as I think, at least in some sections of the Church, an increase of holy love, and a more urgent inquiry waked up on this very subject.

Let us, therefore, give God the glory for what he is still doing for the sons of men, and “ be strong in the Lord of Hosts, and in the power of his might.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Old-fashioned Methodism—In what it consists—Distinction between its vital principles and circumstantial parts—The first never change—The second may or may not be, though necessary to its growth—Divine call of its ministry—This essential—Circumstantials contribute much to its success—In these there is a manifest improvement.

IF I have not very much miscalculated the comparative state of this Church, I think I have so far succeeded in proving that, instead of degenerating from its primitive purity, it has much improved in its general character, as well as in its means and capabilities of doing good; and that it has actually put forth its energies, in various ways, to advance the cause of Jesus Christ. This leads me to notice another feature in Methodism.

Some ignorant enthusiasts, whenever anything new is introduced, have a very short, but, in their estimation, an irresistible argument against it, and that is, "This is not old-fashioned Methodism." If you ask these persons what "old-fashioned Methodism" is, perhaps they are at a loss for an answer. What I understand by Methodism, whether old-fashioned or new-fashioned, is this :—

That it lays hold of, and holds fast to, those cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, enumerated in

the preceding chapter, and then applies itself with all its might to propagate them far and near, embracing every opening of Divine Providence, and taking advantage of every new development in the administration of the world, using all the appliances within its grasp, to advance the cause of Christ.

Understanding it in this sense, we must distinguish between the vital principles of Methodism, and its circumstantial parts, or its external features. The former are essential to its existence, because they are *vital*,—the latter may or may not be, because they are mere *circumstances*, though for the time being they may be necessary to its growth and expansion.

To explain myself more particularly upon this head :—By the vital principles of Methodism, I understand those doctrines of the Gospel which embrace the Deity, the fall of man, the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, repentance, faith, justification, and sanctification, and all those doctrines by which we are distinguished from other denominations. By its circumstantial parts, those prudential regulations and appliances for doing good which have grown out of the improvements of the age, the progress of society, and the demands which these things make upon us.

These vital principles must never be changed, whatever changes may take place in human society. No new developments of events, no mutations in the affairs of men, nor any improvements of the age, must be allowed to make any innovation upon the cardinal doctrines of Christ, all of which Methodism holds fast. If, for instance, we were to relinquish the doctrine of the atonement, as generally understood by orthodox Christians, or that of justification by grace through faith, sanctification, the possibility of falling from grace, the witness and fruits of the Spirit; or were we to break up the itinerancy, or lay aside class-meetings, or cease to hold love-feasts, we should no longer be Methodists, because these doctrines form our vital principles, and these usages form those peculiarities by which we are distinguished from all other denominations, and in the use of which our success, by the blessing of God, has mainly resulted. And that which has given life and energy to the whole system, is not only the fact that these doctrines have been held and propagated, but that they have been held and propagated by men that professed to have, and indeed actually had, an experimental knowledge of them, so that whenever they spoke, they spoke of the things which they “had felt and

seen ;"—they said, and their lives demonstrated that they said the truth, that those truths had been sealed upon their consciences by the Holy Spirit. Hence they spoke, "not in the words of man's wisdom," but "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power," "with much assurance in the Holy Ghost." All those things are so essential to the existence and vitality of Methodism, that, were any of them to be laid aside, or used as mere forms, the system would be marred. Were the Methodist ministry, for instance, to cease to experience the life-giving principle of an active faith, and no longer insist upon the necessity of an inward call to their work by the Holy Ghost, and to preach under the influence of that Holy Spirit, urging upon the people the necessity of the witness and fruits of the Spirit, because they themselves have been made partakers of these things, however orthodox they might be in other respects, they would cease to be Methodist preachers, would have sunk into mere formalism, having the "letter which killeth," but destitute of the "Spirit which giveth life."

I wish to be emphatic upon this subject, more especially because I consider it one of the most vital principles in Methodism. Whatever improvements we may make, however learned,

refined, and orthodox in our general creed, deep and profound in our researches, eloquent and pathetic in our addresses, systematic in our sermons, unless the whole be accompanied by the internal energies of the Holy Spirit, and we have such an experimental knowledge of justification and sanctification—or, at least, so far a knowledge of the latter as to be earnestly seeking after it,—and they that thus seek shall soon find—we shall be nothing more than “a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” This has been the boast—if I may be allowed that heretical expression—of the Methodist ministry from the beginning. It was this holy panoply with which Mr. Wesley was armed. And it has been the secret of the astonishing success of his ministers in the awakening and conversion of sinners. If, therefore, they ever lay it aside, as a part of “old-fashioned Methodism,” and substitute in its place the tinsel of human embellishments,—if they cease “living by faith in the Son of God,” and substitute for this living faith the chaff of outward forms and ceremonies,—if they substitute human philosophy for the “pure word of God,” and theory for experience and practice,—if they so far lose sight of their high and holy calling as to seek their own fame, ease, or self-aggrandizement, instead of the glory of God in

the salvation of souls,—if they substitute wit and sarcasm, and the tinsel of human oratory, for the “words of truth and soberness,”—if they descend to personal recriminations resulting from envy and jealousy, instead of cultivating the mutual respect and good-will which flow from brotherly love,—then shall God write “Ichabod” upon all our borders, for the “glory” will have “departed from us,” because one of the most vital principles of Methodism will have been abandoned.

It is equally necessary that the whole Church should be deeply imbued with these same principles. This is what I understand by “Old-fashioned Methodism.” Nor do I desire to see anything substituted in its place.

Now for the circumstantialia of Methodism. Time was when we had no ordinances; yet Methodism existed without them, only so far as its disciples received them from the hands of ministers of other denominations. They were provided at the organization of the Church in 1784; and though I doubt not but this circumstance has been greatly beneficial in enabling us to diffuse the blessings of the Gospel, yet facts prove that we could have existed without them. Since then a Book-Concern, the establishment of academies and colleges, the Missionary So-

ciety, Sunday-schools, and various charitable institutions—besides the Bible cause, and the Colonization Society, into which we have entered in conjunction with other denominations—have been added as useful adjuncts to the main cause.

Now, though these things are not essential to the existence of Methodism, they are great helps in developing its principles, in diffusing its spirit, and in extending its influence far and wide, among all orders and ranks of men; and although, if they were laid aside, we might still exist, and perhaps retain our vital principles; yet, I apprehend, Methodism would be greatly circumscribed in its usefulness; as, without them, we certainly never could have obtained that commanding influence, and taken that elevated stand which we now hold in the community; and hence, were we to lop off these flourishing branches from the living tree, it would no longer afford that broad shelter to the weary sons of men which it now does, and promises yet more extensively to do.

These are the branches, living and flourishing, that have grown from the main stock; which, by their thrift, show that the vital energies of the original trunk are by no means exhausted. So long, therefore, as this living tree shall remain grounded and rooted in the rich soil in

which it was first planted, being continually watered with the “dew of heaven,” it shall continue to feed and nourish these living branches ; and likewise be sufficiently vigorous to send forth others, which the progress of events, and the improvements and wants of the age, may dictate to be necessary or expedient.

By “old-fashioned Methodism,” then, we are to understand that system of doctrine and discipline by which we have all along been distinguished ; in the mean time adapting itself to the state of society, and the progress of events, so as to take advantage of every new opening of divine Providence, which may call for the intervention of auxiliary helps and fresh appliances for extending the Redeemer’s kingdom among men.

Now, has not Methodism improved in this respect ? And has it not entered—and that with energy and success—into every open door, by adding the missionary, educational, and other benevolent institutions, as branches to the original stock ? And has it not shown, and does it not continue to show, that, deriving all its power of doing good from the great Head of the Church ; and receiving from that supreme Fountain of life unceasing supplies of grace and truth ; it sends forth to every limb and branch

sap and nourishment, to feed and strengthen them, so that their "leaves are always green?" I do not say that it has done all this as vigorously and faithfully as it ought and might have done, had all its sons and daughters, and especially its ministers, acted up to their high and holy calling with a diligence proportionate to their distinguished privileges, and their consequent high responsibilities.

But while a retrospect of the past ought to inspire us with gratitude to God, for what he has done by our feeble instrumentality, a prospect of the future should stimulate us to increased activity in the important cause in which we are engaged. The first will exclude all needless complaining and captious fault-finding; and the second will remove all distrust in the goodness of God, and all gloomy apprehensions, or doubtful forebodings, of what is yet to come; while a knowledge of what is now passing around us, will fill us with humble adoration of Him who is the "Author of every good and perfect gift."

CHAPTER IX.

Want of success no evidence of a destitution of holiness, or of a Divine call—Defects always apparent—Modification of the itinerancy beneficial—Proved from a comparison of the former and present state of the old Rhinebeck district—Advantages of stations and small circuits.

THOUGH I believe the work of holiness is advancing among us as a people, I doubt not but that in particular places there is a declension, owing, perhaps, to unfaithfulness or unskilfulness in the ministry, or to other causes too recondite for the human mind to fathom, or too mighty for man, or even for a divine Hand, to control, without destroying human liberty. Let it be remembered that a minister's holiness, or fidelity, or skilfulness, is not to be measured by his success. In one place it is said that even Jesus Christ could "do no mighty works, because of their unbelief." And if unbelief was so potent as to resist the power of omnipotence, when wielded by the God-man himself, are we to expect that it will always yield to the force of truth, though this truth may be wielded by the hand of a man as holy as Enoch, or Noah, or St. Paul, or any other holy man of God? "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase." Though it must

be admitted that God does not call and send forth an ungodly man into the work of the ministry, yet many a godly minister has been led to adopt the language of the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for naught."

These things being conceded in favour of those who contend that Methodism has declined in some places, and of those who labour without any visible effect, I would ask, In what period of the Church have not these sad effects appeared? Those who doubt this have been very inattentive to the history of events. I can remember, in the early days of my ministry, when whole societies were nearly broken up, and scattered abroad, through perhaps the misconduct of a preacher, or the obstinacy of some of the members; and these difficulties were always occurring, more or less, in particular places, while the great body of the Church, in her collective capacity, remained sound and healthy, and accordingly put forth her energies for the promotion of the cause of God. Those who look for such a perfection in the Church as shall exclude these defects, calculate too highly upon human nature, and do not make sufficient allowance for human infirmities, mixed indeed with the remains of hereditary depravity, as it

is found in every Christian not yet entirely sanctified to God.

After all, it is contended by some, as an evidence of our declension, that our circuits are shortened, and cut up into stations, and that thus the labour of the ministry is abridged, and, of course, its usefulness curtailed. The fact is allowed, while the consequence is denied. On the contrary, I contend that this very fact is an evidence of our improvement. I hope I may not be accused of egotism, by relating the following facts from my own experience:—

Under the joint superintendency of Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree, I was appointed, in 1813, to the Rhinebeck District, which then comprehended what are now Poughkeepsie, Rhinebeck, New-Haven, and Hartford districts, in all of which there was but one single station, and that so feeble as scarcely to show signs of life. After going around the district once or twice, I said to the preachers, "You might as well go home and go to sleep, as to preach in the manner you do, so far as building up Methodism is concerned. You may indeed be instrumental in the awakening and conversion of sinners; but while you preach once in two weeks in a place on week-days and Sabbaths, and are absent from your appointments all the

rest of your time, though sinners may be awakened, yet, during your absence, other denominations, who have their stated ministrations every Sabbath, and whose ministers are constantly among the people, will gather the principal part of them into their churches, and thus you lose all your labour, so far as the Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned." "What shall we do?" it was asked. I answered, "We must go to work and build meeting-houses, and have a preacher stationed in every city and considerable village in the country, in order to establish Methodism." In this they generally acquiesced. But how we were to accomplish it, was the grand question. We had, to be sure, small, feeble societies scattered through the country, some of them more numerous than others, but none of them were able to support a preacher, and but few to build a church, while many of these societies were so small and insignificant that they had not courage to lift up their heads in the community. And this was the case generally in these northerly regions, particularly in the New-England States.

Well, we made a beginning, as well as we could. Not much indeed was done during the four years that I remained on the district. I endeavoured, however, by conversation and

preaching, to diffuse the spirit which I felt ought to pervade the societies, and to convince all, both preachers and people, that our plan of preaching must be modified in the manner above specified. A foundation was thus laid, and it has been gradually built upon from that day to this. What has been the result? In that region of country, such have been the blessed effects of this plan and these labours, that instead of one district we now have four; instead of twenty-five preachers, the number employed in 1817, the year I left it, we have one hundred and twenty-nine; and instead of 4,718 members of the Church, the number returned on the Minutes for 1817, we now have 18,142; and instead of being compelled to preach in private houses, school-houses, and barns, as we were in those days—for there were but very few churches, and those so small, and located in such obscure places, as hardly to be known, and many of them but half finished—we have now commodious churches erected and neatly finished in every city, and in almost every village and considerable settlement throughout the country. And I verily believe that if we had gone on in our old method of four and six weeks circuits, preaching only once in two weeks in a place, our labours would have been comparatively

“in vain,” and we, of course, should never have seen the benign results above recorded.

I presume to say that similar results have been witnessed all over the country, where similar means have been used. The fact is, a competent preacher stationed in one place, if as diligent as he ought and may be, will soon familiarize himself with his people; can visit the sick, the delinquents, and incite them forward in the discharge of duty; bury the dead, perform the marriage ceremony, meet the classes, attend prayer-meetings, and perform all other pastoral duties, and then have time enough for study,—for whenever I hear a minister say that he has no time for study, or for the discharge of any other indispensable duty, I take it for granted that he is either indolent, or knows not how to economize his time.

Now these are the advantages arising from changing the old circuit system into stations, as the above statistical facts abundantly demonstrate, and to the truth of which those of us who can remember our former days of feebleness, and compare them with our present strength, can bear ample testimony. Indeed, the great revival of religion and consequent increase of membership in 1843 and 1844, have occurred since this modification of the itinerancy had been

introduced, and affords another proof of the practical benefits resulting from it. Our old plan of extending over so large a surface—which, under the circumstances, might have been the best for the time being, as our preachers were few in number, and we had no societies only as we succeeded in forming them—was ill calculated to build up churches and establish congregations, whatever might have been its effects in arousing the slumbering multitude to the concerns of eternity; but as the population increased, the societies and their numbers multiplied, additional preachers became necessary, ministerial labour more urgent, and the calls for pastoral oversight more frequent and constant.

The present system, therefore, of a more contracted sphere of labour, is the natural result of the improved state of society, of the greater populousness and compactness of the villages and settlements. As to the larger cities, they were always considered as being of sufficient importance to demand the presence of stationed ministers. We might therefore as well wish that our thickly settled parts of the country, and our populous cities and villages, should revert to their former wilderness state, with only here and there a log hut, as to desire that our

present short circuits, numerous and flourishing stations, and comparatively contracted districts, should relapse into their former enlarged condition; for the one would no more militate against the advance of agricultural, mechanical, mercantile, and professional prosperity and the blessings of civilization, than the other would be injurious to the growth, compactness, and consequently the prosperity of the Church of God.

Allowing the views above expressed to be accurate, as I fully believe they are, then here is another evidence of improvement. The very fact, therefore, that we have so far modified our itinerant system, that we may bestow more labour on any given place, instead of being an evidence of deterioration, is found to be a proof of directly the reverse.

CHAPTER X.

Comparison between American and English Methodism—We greatly outnumber them—The cause of this—Apology for the comparison—Respect of the Author for his English brethren—The objection taken from them has no foundation in reality—In finances they exceed us—Our deficiency unnecessary—A remedy proposed.

STILL it may be said by some, that our method of cutting up the circuits is not the best, inasmuch as our English brethren do not do the

like. Their example is often quoted to prove the inutility of the measure.

This objection, however, allowing its truth, so far from militating against the modification of the itinerancy for which I contend, is an argument in its favour, as the following facts will demonstrate. Notwithstanding Methodism had been in operation for about thirty years in Great Britain before it commenced its leavening effects in America, it does not, even now, number half the members in its communion that we do. The numbers in the societies in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, including all their missions, and those in the Canada Conference—the latter of which, by the by, were raised up principally through our instrumentality—are 483,296, and the preachers, 1,903 ; whereas, we enumerate, including the North and South, 1,114,509 members, and 5,243 travelling preachers. Look at the difference.

	Members.	T. Pr.
Number in the United States and Territories, and on the Missions	1,114,509	9,138
Number in Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, and Missionary Stations	494,274	1,903
	620,230	3,340

giving more than double the number of both preachers and people to the American branch.

Now there must be some adequate cause for

this great disparity in the success of the ministry in these two departments of the same Church. It cannot be in the density of the population, for they are not only more numerous than we are, but they are confined to a surface of country not one-thirtieth part as large as that over which our population extends ; so that they can preach to a given number of people in a much smaller space than we can, and, of course, with a proportionally less degree of physical labour. Neither can it be for lack of talent in the British ministry, as they certainly embody in the itinerancy men of eminent endowments and acquirements, fully equal, if, indeed, not superior to any that we possess. It is true that, with all these superior advantages, they are encumbered with an enormous Church establishment, of which they have always, very injudiciously, in my judgment, professed themselves to be members, and to the support of which those of them who are land-holders have to contribute, in proportion to the value of their estates, in addition to supporting their own institutions. This, no doubt, has very much impeded their career of usefulness, and prevented the growth of their own societies, however much it may have contributed to advance the cause of evangelical piety in the established

Church, or among the dissenting denominations. We, on the other hand, have free scope, are trammelled with no State establishments, but have all the rights and privileges of citizens and Christians guarantied to us by the equitable Constitution under which we live; so that we can walk forth unfettered by any State or United States laws, or exclusive privilege of one sect above another, husbanding all our means, temporal, intellectual, and spiritual, for our own exclusive benefit, or rather for the benefit of mankind. This is doubtless a great advantage over our British brethren, and one which we derive from our civil institutions, more than from any difference in church organization, or any other incidental circumstance; and for which we are indebted to the providence of God, which gave us our independence as a nation.

But these comparative advantages and disadvantages are insufficient of themselves to account for the difference in the results of our respective efforts. The chief cause of this, I am inclined to believe, is, that while we have cherished the spirit of revival, they have suffered it to languish. This belief is founded not only upon the fact above adduced, of the great disparity in the respective numbers in communion in the two branches of the same Church, but more es-

pecially upon the observations of travellers who have visited that country, and whose opportunities of comparing the two connexions have been favourable. Among others, the late eminent Dr. Fisk, whose memory I love to cherish, whose piety and talents adorned the Church of which he was a member and a minister, mentions an instance in which one of the Wesleyan preachers asked him, if he thought our revivals did us any good. To this the Doctor answered, with some amazement, that he was surprised to hear such a question from a son of Wesley, whose journals recorded so many instances of the work of God, and more especially as the very existence of Methodism was owing to a revival of pure and undefiled religion. This, however, may have been an isolated case; and though not characteristic of the whole body, yet it is to be feared that this indifference to the spirit of powerful revivals of religion too much pervades the body of Methodists in England. They may, indeed, go on enlarging their mental powers, and systematizing their theology; but unless they, in the mean time, dive proportionately deep into the ocean of Divine love, and drink large draughts from that perennial fountain, so that they can pour forth its refreshing streams to water the thirsting souls of men, they will

see but little fruit of their labours. In a word, *they must strive for revivals*, if they would *avoid the curse of formalism*.

But comparisons of this sort are always invidious, and more especially when made by the more favoured party. I will therefore pursue them no further; and offer, as an apology for introducing them at all, the apparent necessity of meeting and obviating the objection which has been so often made, by referring to our English brethren, as an example for us to follow, as though all perfection concentrated in them, while so many imperfections cling to us, that they operate as a clog to stop the wheels of our itinerancy; whereas, with all their perfection and all our imperfection, we have far outstripped them in the race, and in winning souls to Christ. And certainly no man who understands the subject, and is acquainted with the writer, will attribute these remarks to any want of respect for our British brethren; for no one, I presume to say, feels a more profound respect for that elder branch of the Wesley family than I do, or more highly appreciates the many advantages we have derived from John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, and from their successors in the ministry. So long as pure Christianity shall exist in our world, shall

the name of Wesley, of Fletcher, of Clarke, of Benson, of Watson, and of Moore, be venerated as among the best, the most holy, and the most useful and highly gifted of men; and when I shall cease to remember them with a grateful recollection of their many excellences, and their highly useful services in the Church, may "my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." But this veneration should not, as it does not, blind me to the faults which I think I perceive have crept in among them, and which, if not timely corrected, may prove alike injurious to themselves and to the world at large. If in error, I pray God and my brethren to forgive me; but if my views are correct, a timely warning will do them no harm, and may be a lasting benefit to ourselves, in guarding us against a like defect.

But, after all, the objection I am considering has little foundation in truth; for while they link several stations together, and thus form a circuit, by means of which they secure an interchange of ministerial gifts and labours, one or the other is always on the spot to attend to pastoral duties, while one only is absent at a time in the remoter parts of the circuit. And these circuits, what are they? They are nothing more than stations in close proximity to

each other, for they have some dozen of them in the city of London.

I grant that were our preachers in the larger cities more frequently to interchange pulpits, it might be better for themselves and the people ; but I never would advise a relapse into the former mode, not even in the country places, of extended circuits ; for I believe it would be greatly detrimental to the work of God, and I have seen the operation and effects of both modes, and much prefer the latter, for the reasons already assigned.

In another respect I allow that our British brethren are far in advance of us : I allude to their financial affairs. Following the example set them by Wesley, they hold themselves under obligation to pay every claimant his and her full demand. To enable them to do this, they have adopted a system of finance so regular and uniform in its operation, that every member of their communion, the poorest not excepted, is expected to give something, at least a penny a week, while the more wealthy average sixpence a week. To meet extraordinary cases, arising from sickness or unexpected losses, and to raise the amounts necessary to sustain their schools, theological or other, they make special collections, and have likewise stated subscriptions ;

and whatever amount is allowed to any preacher, efficient, supernumerary, or superannuated, is fully paid him ; and the same is true respecting widows of deceased preachers, and their orphan children. This is as it ought to be.

Instead of this being done among us, we permit our superannuated preachers, our widows and orphan children, to go with one-half, one-third, and in many instances, with one-fourth, of the small pittance allowed them by the Discipline. This is a burning shame, and it is our own fault. We have adopted the absurd, yea, I might say, the dishonest principle, and have always acted on it, that if we have the money in hand, we will pay it, and if not, the dependent claimants must go without their just demands ; we make no effectual effort to make up their deficiency ; whereas we might, with the utmost ease, were a suitable system of finance arranged, and if every one concerned would carry it into practical effect, collect and pay to every claimant his and her entire allowance. Let this allowance be considered as a just debt which the Church owes to her servants, which she is bound in honour and conscience to pay ; and then let a systematical plan,—such a plan as shall bear equally upon all,—be adopted to raise the money ; and let the necessity of the

case be explained to and enforced upon the people, and this sickening complaining would soon be silenced throughout all our borders.

But though these defects are very apparent, in consequence of which there is much individual suffering, yet there is a great improvement even in this respect. There is not half the deficiency now as formerly, notwithstanding the increased allowance to the preachers and their families. It was not until 1816 that any provision was made for fuel and table expenses. Before and until that time the preacher was allowed only \$80 a year and his travelling expenses, and his wife, if he had one, the same; \$16 a year for each child under seven years of age, and \$24 for all from seven to fourteen; and even that small pittance was seldom paid; and scarcely a parsonage fit for a decent family to inhabit was found in all our borders, except perhaps in some of our larger cities. In consequence of the loose manner of managing the financial concerns of the Church, the poverty of the societies, and the general impression, often made by the injudiciousness of the preachers themselves, that the Gospel was to be preached literally "without money and without price," but few of our early preachers received enough to clothe them comfortably, and they were gene-

rally treated as paupers, dependent upon the charity of the public.

Thank God, this state of things is somewhat altered for the better; and when our financial system shall be perfected, and the truth deeply engraven upon the hearts of all, that we are under a religious obligation to redeem our pledges, by giving to every claimant the full amount we have solemnly promised to him and her, then will Methodism stand erect, and challenge its enemies to lay aught to its charge on the score of bad faith in its temporal matters.

CHAPTER XI.

Defects in the Church—In the primitive Church—Influence of Methodism—Low state of religion at the time Wesley began his ministry—This fact generally acknowledged—His qualifications for his work—Revival of the missionary work, the effect of Methodism—Proved from the state of the several missionary societies—In these the Methodists took the lead—This stated as an historical fact.

I THINK I have succeeded in showing that there has been an encouraging improvement in almost every respect in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I do not say that these improvements have been as deep and extensive as they might, and therefore should have been. How far we might have been in advance of what we now are, had

we wisely availed ourselves of every opening door for usefulness, and exerted ourselves with the utmost diligence in the use of those religious appliances within our reach, who can tell? Had we all, preachers and people, been as entirely devoted to God, in soul and body, in time and substance, as we should have been; had we consecrated unitedly all our powers to God, seeking and obtaining that "perfect love," which we all profess to believe attainable in this life, by which we should have been impelled forward in the discharge of every duty, there can be no doubt but that we should have extended our borders far more extensively than we have done. But this is a state of perfection in the Church hardly to be expected in this life, constituted as mankind are, not only encompassed with numerous infirmities, exposed continually to temptations from without, and weaknesses from within, a liability to error from a variety of causes, but also, until we are wholly sanctified to God, exhibiting less or more of the infection of hereditary depravity.

Indeed, such a perfection never yet was seen, not even in the primitive Church. Even in our Saviour's time, a traitor appeared among his twelve apostles; and in the apostolic Church, after the day of Pentecost, Ananias and Sap-

phira were struck dead for lying unto the Holy Ghost. And whoever reads over with attention the Epistles, more particularly those of St. Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, will be convinced that there were disorders which needed removal, acts of immorality which called for apostolic rebuke, as well as errors in doctrine and practice which could be checked and rectified only by the exercise of a strict discipline. It is true the Philippian Church seemed to be a rare example of purity, and hence it called forth the highest eulogy from the Apostle Paul, causing him to "rejoice exceedingly for the joy of their faith," and for the fidelity with which they had received and held fast the doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ. With this happy exception, all had subjected themselves to rebuke; and the five Churches of Asia, to which the Revelator directed his inspired epistles, had all something to correct, for the Lord said to them, "I have somewhat against you."

These remarks have been made for the purpose of showing that, however perfect may be our doctrine or discipline, it can scarcely be expected, in the present state of human society, that no "spot or wrinkle" should be found to disfigure the face of the Church. There will,

in fact, always be some loiterers, some backsliders, and probably many formalists ; and if St. Paul could say in his day, " All seek their own, and not the Lord Jesus," need we be surprised to find upstarts, both in the ministry and membership, who manifest more solicitude for their own aggrandizement than they do for the glory of God in the salvation of souls ? But leaving all such to find their way through the world as they best may, let us inquire into the influence which Methodism, with all its imperfections, has had on the world, and more especially on the religious world. It is now about one hundred and ten years since the first Methodist Society was formed in London, under the direction of that eminent servant of God, the Rev. John Wesley. What was the general state of the religious world at that time ? It will be admitted, I think, on all sides, that, with but few exceptions, the Christian Church, so called, whether Papist or Protestant, had generally sunk away into lukewarmness, while many portions of it had abjured the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation, substituting in their place mere forms and ceremonies, or a rational method of interpreting the Holy Scriptures, by which they were deprived of all their energy, and stripped of their characteristic excellence,

namely, the grand promise of the Holy Spirit to awaken, to regenerate, and sanctify the sinner. In a word, the greater proportion of the Christian world had fallen asleep, as it respects spiritual and Divine things, so much so that Bishop Butler observed, "That it seems to be taken for granted that Christianity is but a fable." Hence the shafts of infidelity were hurled at its vitals, and it seemed to have little left with which to defend itself but to resort to tradition, to external rites and ceremonies; and these were mostly torn to pieces by the "cunning craftiness" of skeptical men who knew not God. In this sad condition was the great mass of Christendom when John Wesley arose, to stem the torrent of infidelity and iniquity which was rolling over the land, and threatening to sweep off the little remains of truth and righteousness that were still found upon the earth.

I shall not be accused of partiality, by any competent to form a candid judgment, when I say that no man could have been better fitted, from erudition, strength of intellect, acuteness of understanding, deep experimental and practical piety, for the task of reforming mankind than was John Wesley. Nor can more substantial evidence be adduced of the general corruption of morals and manners which then pervaded

all ranks of society, than the opposition with which he had to contend at the commencement of his ministerial career. In consequence of his preaching the doctrine of justification by grace, through faith in the atoning merits of the Lord Jesus, and urging the necessity of sanctification, and holiness of heart and life, he was ejected from the pulpits of the establishment, branded as a heretic, by bishops, priests, and deacons; hooted at by the ignorant rabble as a disturber of the peace, and persecuted in a variety of ways, by dissenters as well as by members of the established Church, all agreeing to load him with contumely and reproach as a "pestilent fellow." None of these outbreaks of depraved hearts did for a moment move him from his purpose, nor produce any other emotion than the tenderest pity for those who spake all manner of evil of him.

See the effect which has been produced. Not only has this outward opposition ceased, but almost the entire evangelical world has adopted, or at least revived, in a greater or less degree, his sentiments, and the different branches of the Church are moving heaven and earth to carry them into effect. Let us see if this be not the case.

The grand missionary cause has received an

impetus, since Wesley began his energetic ministry, to which it had been a stranger from the days of the apostles until that time. It is true that some missions had been undertaken by various Protestant denominations at different times, and in different places, but they had been productive of but little practical result, with the exception of the Moravian missions in the West Indies, and among some of the North American Indians, and the labours of Elliot and others, whose laudable efforts were directed to the conversion of the Indians in their more immediate vicinity ; but even these latter missions produced no lasting benefit, as scarcely any trace of true Christianity was found among the natives of our forests at the beginning of the present century ; and as to the former, they had, and have still, but a limited influence ; though we should not forget that John Wesley himself was indebted to a Moravian missionary for the light he received on the doctrine of justification by faith, and the witness and fruits of the Spirit.

But since Mr. Wesley commenced his evangelical labours, setting such an example as he did, by his astonishing efforts to diffuse the blessings of a *living* Christianity among mankind, travelling from one end of the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to another, pro-

claiming with a loud and distinct voice, to all classes of men, that they must "fear God, and give glory to his name," missionary societies have sprung into existence in almost every direction, among all denominations of Christians, and their missionaries have been sent to the four quarters of the globe, "preaching Jesus and the resurrection." A glance at the date of the several missionary societies will verify the fact above stated, that the most of these have been commenced since Wesleyan Methodism began its leavening influence upon the community. With the exception of the Moravian missions, before alluded to, and one established in Lapland, by the king of Sweden, in 1559, and those among the American Indians, by Elliot and others, in 1646, and another on the coast of Coromandel, in the East Indies, in 1705, and one more in Greenland, in 1721, there was no Protestant mission in existence until 1786, when Dr. Coke was compelled, by adverse winds, to change his course towards Nova Scotia, to which he had intended to go, and land himself, and the missionaries who accompanied him, in the island of Antigua, where he established a mission.

In 1793, the Baptist Missionary Society was organized, and sent missionaries to Bengal. In

1796 the London Missionary Society commenced its operations by sending missionaries to the South-Sea Islands. In 1799 Dr. Coke opened a mission to the native Irish. In 1800, the New-York (Baptist) Missionary Society commenced a mission among the Tuscarora Indians. In 1808, the Edinburgh Missionary Society sent missionaries to explore the country between the Caspian and Black Seas. In 1803, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church established a mission among the Cherokee Indians. In 1809, Dr. Coke began a mission for the benefit of the French prisoners on the English coast. In 1810, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized in the city of Boston. In 1813, Dr. Coke, in company with seven missionaries, embarked for the East Indies. In 1814, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was formed. In 1819, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed. In 1816, the New-York Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society was organized; and the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society for the United States was established in 1823. In 1826, the American Home Missionary Society was organized.

From these facts it will be perceived that all these societies were organized after, and some

of them long after, Methodism had been working in the hearts, and exemplifying its principles in the lives of mankind, and that Dr. Coke, a disciple of Wesley, took the lead in this God-like enterprise, by establishing a mission for the salvation of the slave population of Antigua. It is, therefore, as evident as the shining of the sun at noonday, that Wesleyan Methodism has exerted an influence of a highly beneficial character upon other denominations, in, first, exciting a spirit of experimental piety, and, secondly, in leading them forth in the grand work of converting the world to Christianity, by means of missionary labours.

This is not said by way of vain boasting. "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is recorded as an historical fact, now very generally acknowledged by all impartial, candid Christians, and hence it would be false modesty to attempt its concealment. That other denominations have felt more or less the genial influence of Methodism, and have thereby been revived in evangelical principles and experience, is a fact which I delight to record, not merely because I belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church, but chiefly because it demonstrates a diffusive spread of evangelical light and love, and is an encourag-

ing omen of the near approach of that day when all nations shall acknowledge Jesus Christ as the King of saints, and the "knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the great deep." And I would say of them all, "Would to God they were all prophets," that is, that they were all "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness;" for those who are so will labour *together* for the faith of the gospel, for the furtherance of the cause of Christ, irrespective of sects and parties, knowing that in this holy family there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism."

By what means Methodism has produced this salutary effect, will be more fully stated hereafter, should God permit me to pursue my train of thoughts to its close. In the mean time allow me here to remark, to prevent misunderstanding upon this subject, that it was not by the invention of any new doctrine that Wesley effected the reformation which accompanied his and the labours of his coadjutors and successors in the ministry, but it was by reviving and bringing out prominently, explicitly, and definitely, before the people, truths which lay hidden in their articles of faith, and were found scattered in their formularies of devotion, and so presenting them to the understandings, and pressing

their solemn weight upon the consciences of all who were within the sound of his and their voice, that their high importance might be duly appreciated, and their experimental and practical bearing felt in the heart, and exemplified in the life. These great truths of God had long been laid aside by the generality of Christians, and so entirely forgotten, that but few seemed aware that they had ever been taught. These truths Wesley resuscitated, dragged them from the tomb, clothed them in a new garb, and presented them to the people in so living and lovely a form, that while the wicked at first hated and persecuted them, and him that proclaimed them, those who became "wise in heart" discerned their beauty, appreciated their excellence, believed and embraced them with their whole hearts, and thus became, in their turn, witnesses of their saving power. In this way the work spread, and in this way it is still spreading, and I most ardently pray that it may continue to spread, until "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."

CHAPTER XII.

Tract cause—Mr. Wesley took the lead in this—Reformed the literature of the age—His object in writing, to do good—Title of some of his tracts—Distributed one at the church door in London—Commences his printing establishment—His example followed by others—Hannah More—Tract societies organized in England and the United States—An example of the good effects of a tract.

It is not alone in the missionary department that the influence of Methodism has been felt. In the various benevolent institutions of the day, which are now blessing mankind with their hallowing effects, the Methodists have not only taken a prominent part, but in many of them they have taken the lead. The first of these which I shall mention is the Tract cause, chiefly because it is well calculated to scatter religious knowledge in the cheapest and most expeditious form, among the great mass of the community.

Mr. Wesley was the first in modern times to avail himself of this method of diffusing religious truth, and that too in the most pointed manner; aiming his rebukes and instructions directly to the conscience of the sinner, by means of short, pithy tracts. I say the first among modern writers; for though Wiclif

published and circulated small tracts for the instruction of the common people, and Luther issued his German translation of the Bible in small fragments at a time, and likewise sent out some doctrinal theses in short pieces by themselves, they had long ceased to circulate: and most of the book-knowledge was either locked up in the cabinets of princes, or confined in private or public libraries, and found chiefly in large tomes too bulky for an ordinary man to read, and much of even this was hidden from the common people in the learned languages. This was the general state of the literature of the world when Wesley commenced the publication of small books, written in the plainest possible style, compressing much matter into few words; abridging large folios by leaving out all superfluous words, and erroneous or unprofitable matter, as well as composing sermons and small tracts of his own, so as to bring them within the reach of the greatest number of people. In this way he became not only a reformer of the hearts and lives of the people, but also of the literature of the age, and introduced a method of circulating small tracts upon a variety of religious and literary subjects before unknown to the community. Hear his reason for this. Under date of March 17, 1769, after

giving an account of an abridgment he had been making of Dr. Watts' pretty Treatise on the Passions, he says, "Why do persons who treat the same subjects with me, write so much larger books? Of many reasons, is not this the chief—We do not write with the same view! Their *principal end* is to get money: my *only one* to do good." This indeed was the only object of not only his writing, but of all he did; for notwithstanding he had the fairest opportunity imaginable of accumulating riches, he died not worth £10 sterling, independent of his books, after his debts were paid; not one five-hundredth part of what Southey is said to have made for writing the Life of Wesley, in which he branded that holy man of God with the base motive of unholy ambition in all his movements, and in the compilation of which he proved his utter incompetency to estimate the worth of the character, to understand the principles, or to appreciate the motives of the man of whom he wrote.

But I was about proving that Wesley was the first in modern times to write small tracts, and circulate them gratuitously among the people. His tracts entitled, "A Word to a Sabbath-Breaker," "A Word to a Swearer," "A Word to a Drunkard," "A Word to an Un-

happy Woman," "A Word to a Smuggler," with others of a like character, admirably suited to the times, were written about the year 1767, nearly sixty years before any tract society was organized in the United States. And whoever will take the trouble of reading those tracts—and they may be seen in the seventh volume of his works, pp. 355–377—will be convinced that more pointed, Scriptural, experimental, and practical tracts cannot be found in the English language; all expressed in language plain, pithy, and home to the point, and admirably calculated to awaken the sinner's conscience, and to lead him to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Among others, there is one entitled, "A Word to a Protestant," which I would take the liberty of recommending to those who are blustering about the Roman Catholics, and they will learn how to treat them so as to convert them to the knowledge of the truth, instead of spending their time and strength in denouncing the curse of God upon them indiscriminately. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

I said above, that the tracts mentioned were written about the year 1767, though most of them are without date; but it appears from his Journal that he commenced this work at a much

earlier time ; for I find, under date of Wednesday, December 18, 1745, twenty-two years anterior to the time above mentioned, the following entry :—

“ We had, within a short time, given away some thousands of little tracts among the common people. And it pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy. Insomuch that the lord mayor had ordered a large number of papers, dissuading from cursing and swearing, to be printed and distributed to the trainbands. And this day ‘ An Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance ’ was given at every church door, in or near London, to every person that came out ; and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church. I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith.— *Works*, vol. iii, p. 361.

Mr. Wesley, perceiving the immense benefit resulting from scattering among the people religious tracts, and other books on a variety of subjects, in the cheapest possible form, was led to establish a printing-press of his own, that he might control it in the manner he saw best. Here his books were printed under his own direction, freed from those restraints and interruptions with which he had often been perplexed by the carelessness of those who had heretofore printed his works. And what a mighty revolution has this example effected in the religious world ! Not only have the Wes-

leyan Methodists in England, and the American Methodists, book establishments, but the Presbyterians, the Protestant Episcopalians, and the American Tract Society, have publication offices, at which are printed a vast variety of tracts, Sunday-school books, and other publications; each denomination selecting and issuing such as may please it best, or which it may judge most suitable to answer its object.

In this good work also, as well as in the preparation of small tracts, Wesleyan Methodism took the lead, setting an example for using this mighty lever, the printing-press, for diffusing religious knowledge throughout the world.

But to pursue the history of the tract cause. We have already seen that Mr. Wesley began in this work as early as 1745; and the next author of any eminence who adopted this method of instructing the ignorant and reforming the vicious, was the pious and celebrated Hannah More. Seeing the progress of infidelity among the lower class of society, her spirit was stirred within her to adopt some suitable means to check its pernicious influence. Hence she was led to write small tracts, and put them in circulation for the special benefit of those whose time and means would not allow them to purchase and read larger works. These, and other ex-

amples, led to the establishment of the Religious Tract Society in England, and various Tract Societies in the United States, and finally the American Tract Society in the city of New-York, in 1825, just eighty years after Mr. Wesley gives an account of distributing the tract entitled "An Earnest Exhortation to Repentance," at the doors of the churches in London. Long before this or any other similar society was formed, Bishop Asbury was in the habit of distributing small tracts, some of which he got printed at his own expense, among the people he visited, as well as circulating Bibles and Testaments for years anterior to the organization of the American Bible Society. Other benevolent individuals, of various denominations, did the same.

While employed as a missionary on the River Thames, in Upper Canada, to which place I had volunteered my services in 1804, not having any printed tracts, I wrote several very short ones, in as plain a hand as I could, entitled, "A Word to the Swearer," "A Word to the Drunkard," &c., that I might, as I was frequently under the necessity of lodging in taverns, surrounded with such characters, slip them into their pockets, that they might perchance afterwards find and read them.

One instance I remember perfectly well happened at a tavern, where was a large company of Scotch immigrants, who were returning from a settlement which had been formed by Lord Selkirk, which proved so unhealthy that many of them had died, and the remainder, the present company, were fleeing for safety. They were very noisy, some half drunk; and one of their number accosted me, supposing I was a clergyman, in a very incoherent manner, on the subject of religion. I put into his pocket, as secretly as I could, one of my written tracts, "A Word to the Drunkard." Some one, however, saw me do it, and informed the other of what I had done. He read it, and then another read it, and then another, and so it passed around. They all became silent, and apparently solemn. I then arose and gave them an exhortation, read them a chapter from my pocket-Bible, and prayed with them. We had no more noise nor drinking; and I parted with them the next morning with their good-will, and many good wishes. How thankful should I have been, could I have furnished myself with a few short printed tracts, such as those written by Mr. Wesley, before described! But those were days of small things in comparison of these in which we live; days in which tens of thousands

of these little silent mentors are sent out in every direction, "flying," like the angel in the Apocalypse, "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth," and proclaiming it in almost every tongue under heaven.

Such is the influence of Methodism on the method of writing and printing tracts, and other good books. I rejoice exceedingly that others have taken knowledge of us, or rather of John Wesley, in this respect, and are combining their influence in bringing the press to bear, with all its ponderous weight, upon the spiritual and eternal interests of men. May they not cease to apply themselves to this work, until "the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God."

CHAPTER XIII.

Sunday-schools—Originated with Raikes—Wesley among the first to patronize them—Teachers labour gratuitously—Wesley's account of them—Origin in Wales by the labours of Mr. Charles—These gave rise to the Bible Societies—First taught by Methodists in America—The glory of the good work due to God.

WE have seen that Methodism has taken the lead in modern missionary enterprises, and in furnishing the community with small cheap publications, and particularly with tracts, suited to the times, and adapted to the capacities and wants of the common people. This led to further and more beneficial results in the Sunday-school enterprise. For though this movement was begun by Raikes, who was, I believe, a member of the Established Church—and to whatever church he might have belonged, he was an ornament to the Church of Christ, and a philanthropist of the purest sort—in the city of Gloucester, in 1782, yet John Wesley was among the first to patronize Sunday-schools, and recommend them to his people. In his Magazine for January, 1785, only about three years after Raikes began his Sunday-school in Gloucester, Mr. Wesley published an account of them, and exhorted his societies to imitate the

example set them by Mr. Raikes ; and they took his advice, nay, they went far beyond him in the philanthropic character of the schools ; for the teachers engaged in that service bestowed their labours gratuitously, whereas the teachers who were engaged by Raikes were paid for their services, he agreeing to give them a shilling sterling a day for teaching a Sabbath-school. We claim, therefore, for Wesley, the merit of introducing gratuitous instruction in Sabbath-schools, and thereby, in conjunction with the Christian instruction which was imparted, of giving them a decided and thorough religious character. In the same year, 1785, a Methodist Sabbath-school was formed at Bolton le Moor, and, under date of April 16, 1786, Mr. Wesley says, "The house was crowded the more, because of 550 children who are taught in our Sunday-schools : such an army of them got about me when I came out of the chapel, that I could scarcely disengage myself from them." And so rapidly did they multiply in his societies, that they were soon found in almost every part of the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and they were constantly taught without fee or reward.

Mr. Wesley's delight in beholding the prosperity of the Sunday-schools, must have been

exquisite. Speaking of his visit to Bolton, under date of April 19, 1788, he says,—

“And this I must avow, there is not such a set of singers in any of the Methodist congregations in the three kingdoms. There cannot be, for we have nearly a hundred such trebles, boys and girls, selected from the Sunday-schools, and accurately taught, as are not found together in any chapel, cathedral, or music-room within the four seas. Besides, the spirit with which they all sing, and the beauty of many of them, so suits the melody, that I defy any to exceed it, except the singing of angels in our heavenly Father’s house.”

On the 20th of the same month he remarks :—

“About three, I met between 900 and 1000 of the children belonging to our Sunday-schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all neatly clean, as well as plain in their apparel. All were serious and well-behaved. When they all sung together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre ; and, what is best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in his salvation. These are a pattern to all the town. Their usual diversion is to visit the poor that are sick, sometimes six or eight, or ten together, to exhort, comfort, and pray with them. Frequently ten or more get together to sing and pray for themselves, sometimes thirty or forty, and are so earnestly engaged, alternately singing, praying, and crying, that they know not how to part. You children that hear this, why should you not go and do likewise ? Is not God here as well as at Bolton ? Let God arise and maintain his own cause, even *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.*”

Surely they must have applied themselves with a rare diligence to bring these schools to such a degree of perfection within six years after their commencement by the philanthropic Raikes. And it shows with what hearty zeal, as well as wisdom, the Methodists entered into this benevolent work, under the sanction, and at the recommendation, of their founder. And the holy enthusiasm with which Wesley speaks of those Sunday-school children, evinces the ardour with which he beheld this new development of Divine Providence in providing means for the instruction and salvation of the rising generation.

Under date of Madeley, March 24, 1790, in a letter to a friend, he says,—

“I am glad you have set up Sunday-schools at Newcastle. This is one of the best institutions which have been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will do more and more good, provided the teachers and inspectors do their duty. Nothing can prevent the success of this blessed work, but the neglect of the instruments; therefore, be sure to watch them with all care, that they may not grow weary in well-doing.”

Mr. Crowther, in his portraiture of Methodism, states, “that since the establishment of Sunday-schools, the Methodists have done more to support them than all other denominations in England.” Mr. Charles, a Calvinistic Methodist

preacher, was either the first, or among the first, that introduced these schools into Wales. To him is ascribed the honour of originating that philanthropic institution, "The British and Foreign Bible Society," which has been significantly called "the blooming daughter of Sabbath-schools," because the want of the Holy Scriptures in the Sunday-schools in Wales, as communicated by Mr. Charles, led to the formation of that noble institution, and this finally led to the establishment of the American Bible Society, in 1826. It appears, therefore, that the gigantic efforts that have been put, and are now putting forth in the Bible cause, may be distinctly traced to the influence of Methodism. Thus has this "plant of renown," despised and persecuted at first, and for a considerable time after it began its growth, spread out its branches in different directions, sheltering many of the weary sons and daughters of man.

And it should not be forgotten, that while it is stated that the Sunday-School Society in England, during the first fifteen years of its existence—that is, from 1785 to 1800—expended £5,000 sterling in paying the wages of teachers, the Methodist teachers refused all compensation for their services, as is well known to all who are acquainted with the subject, thus showing

the charitable spirit by which they have been, and are, actuated ; and such has been the influence of their example in this respect, that all others have copied it, none receiving, so far as is known to the writer, any pecuniary reward for their services.

But, notwithstanding the above facts are notorious in regard to Sabbath-schools in the Old World, it had been asserted that their commencement in America was owing to the labours of Bishop White and Dr. Rush, and some persons connected with the society of Friends in Philadelphia ; and it had been announced as an indisputable fact, that the school established by Mrs. Bethune, in 1815, was “ *the first Sunday-school in the New World.*” These announcements were generally considered as authentic, until the formation of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in April 2d, 1827, which, on account of the clamour that was made concerning this event, led the managers to investigate the subject, when the following facts were elicited, which were laid before the public in the first Annual Report in 1828 :—

“ We shall not now present the many facts in our possession, which go to defeat the pretensions thus made to the claim of priority in this country, but shall content

ourselves for the present with recording, that in the year 1786, a Sabbath-school was taught in the house of our aged brother, Thomas Crenshaw, now living in Hanover county, Va.; and in the following year, forty-one years ago, the Rev. John Charleston was converted to God in that school, and he also still lives, having laboured with zeal and success for thirty-nine years past as a minister in our Church. About the same time there were many more in successful operation, as may be seen by a reference to Bishop Asbury's Journal, vol. ii, p. 65, and Lee's History of Methodism, pp. 162-3. And from these facts, we apprehend, it will not be denied that these schools were established several years before any other denomination participated in our labours, or shared our reproach. For about this time there were persecutions instituted against the brethren engaged in these schools, which might damp the ardour of most of our modern teachers. By a letter lately received from the Rev. Stith Mead, an old veteran of the cross, now labouring within the bounds of the Virginia Conference, we learn that not long after, the Rev. George Daughaday, stationed preacher at Charleston, S. C., was severely beaten on the head with a club, and subsequently had water pumped on him from a public cistern, for the crime of conducting a Sabbath-school for the benefit of the African children of that vicinity. Thus he and others 'both laboured and suffered reproach,' and we live to reap the fruit of their doings.

"From these statements, which we regret have not been published before, of what our fathers and brethren have done in this good cause, all will agree that at this late date something ought to be expected of us, as the descendants of such progenitors. And we rejoice that the formation of the Sunday-School Union of the Me-

thodist Episcopal Church has given an impulse to these institutions, which, we trust, under the blessing of Heaven, will be seen and felt, with continual augmentation, to the latest posterity. And it is with mingled emotions of pleasure and gratitude, that the Board now invite the attention of the friends and patrons of our infant institution to the interesting details of this their first Annual Report."

Though Mr. Raikes commenced his Sunday-school for the exclusive benefit of those idle and profligate children whom he found playing in the streets on the Lord's day, in the town of Gloucester, and, perhaps, at first, designed nothing more than to teach them the elementary principles of the English language, yet to what important results has that simple circumstance led! Now the Holy Scriptures are read and explained, and children of all classes, those regularly taught in the common schools of the country, and those otherwise instructed in the principles of religion, are gathered into Sunday-schools, and placed under the tuition of teachers who "fear God and work righteousness." Nor is the practice confined to one denomination of Christians, but happily extends among all, not excepting even the Roman Catholics.

Now, although Raikes was not a Methodist, yet Methodism had been at work for nearly half a century before he commenced his public

career of a patron of Sunday-schools. And how far he was indebted to the indirect influence of Methodism, for it pervaded all the ranks of evangelism more or less, who can tell? At any rate, as we have seen above, no sooner was the experiment made, than Wesley availed himself of this auxiliary means to do good to the souls and bodies of men, hailing it with the most exquisite delight, and enlisting all his societies in this work of benevolence to the rising generation. And if we have reason to bless God for the existence and powerful operation of the British and Foreign, and the American and other Bible Societies, then have we abundant cause to praise Him for raising up Methodism, for it was through this influence that these god-like institutions were organized.

These things are not said for the purpose of assuming a glory which belongs exclusively to God. Were we to do this, we might anticipate His frown instead of His smile. "The good that is done upon the earth, He doeth it." But while historical accuracy requires the facts to be stated as they were, a just sense of our dependence on the grace of God in Christ Jesus, constrains us to ascribe to Him, and to Him alone, the honour and glory of "every good and perfect gift." It was God that raised up Wesley,

and made him instrumental of so much good to the Churches. It was God that raised him up such efficient helpers in the field of labour, and thrust them out to convert "sinners from the errors of their ways." It was God that directed the immortal Raikes to devise ways and means to rescue those forlorn children, who were profaning the holy Sabbath, from their thralldom, and gather them into Sabbath-schools. It was the same almighty Spirit who inspired his servants to seize hold of this moral lever, that they might raise the degraded sons of men from their "low estate," and exalt them among the "princes of the people." And He, by the same influence, has raised his willing people, of every name and denomination, to take hold of this instrument, and wield it manfully, in the true spirit of Christian charity, for the destruction of error and vice, and for the establishment of truth and righteousness in the world.

May "many" continue "to run to and fro, until the knowledge" of God's salvation shall "extend from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth."

CHAPTER XIV.

The temperance reformation—Mr. Wesley takes the lead in this—Extract from his sermon—From his tract—General rule on that subject incorporated in an altered form at the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784—The Church vacillates on this subject—Intemperance gaining upon us—The voice of Hewitt awakens us—Restoration of Wesley's Rule—Importance of the cause.

AMONG the many means which have been used in modern times for the good of mankind, we may include the Temperance Reformation as one of the most efficient. The evils of intemperance are so numerous; in many instances so appalling, so complicated in their character, so direfully destructive to present peace and prosperity, and to future hopes and happiness, that it seems needless to enumerate them; there is, indeed, no one vice that has been productive of so great an amount of misery, temporal and eternal, as drunkenness. How many wealthy families have been reduced to poverty; how many wives have been made widows; how many children have been left orphans; how many crimes have been perpetrated, in consequence of inebriety, what pen can write, or what arithmetic can calculate, or what mind can even conceive?

To check an evil of such magnitude, what

mighty efforts have been put forth within the last half century! And yet how many there are who remain under the power of this tyrant!

But among all the writers or speakers against drunkenness, and in favour of temperance, none has wielded a more powerful pen, or spoken with a more distinct and loud voice, than did John Wesley. And he spoke and wrote long before the present temperance reformation commenced its onward march. Even as early as 1743, the rule was inserted in the "General Rules of the United Societies," forbidding "Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." In this rule, not only the *drinking* of spirituous liquors, but all *trafficking* in them, the *buying* or *selling* them, is absolutely prohibited, unless in cases of *extreme* necessity; by which we are to understand the using them only as a medicine. Here, then, was the germ of a strictly temperance society, and all the societies founded by Mr. Wesley recognized this as one of their binding rules. Mr. Wesley, therefore, in this, as well as in many other respects, lived a hundred years in advance of his age, as he actually anticipated the era of the temperance reformation for nearly that length of time. Let us see how he attempted to enforce the rule upon the

consciences of mankind, by his preaching and writings. Among all the warnings to the inebriate, or exhortations to induce him to forsake his cups, and “flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him,” there is none to be found so pointed, and, I might add, so tremendously eloquent, because expressed in the simplest language of truth, addressed directly to the understanding and conscience, as the following, taken from his sermon on “The Use of Money.” He says, among other things by which a man may acquire riches unlawfully:—

“Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour *in his body*. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine; they may be of use in some bodily disorders; although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore such as prepare and sell them only for this end, may keep their conscience clear. But who are they who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder his Majesty’s subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep: and what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: the curse of God cleaves to the

stones, the timber, the furniture of them ! The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves ; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell ! Blood, blood is there ; the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood ! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art ‘ clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day ; ’ canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation ? Not so ; for there is a God in heaven : therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, ‘ thy memorial shall perish with thee ! ’ ” — *Works*, vol. i, p. 443.

One can hardly read these words without a shudder ! Such awful curses denounced upon these “ murderers general,” these “ men of blood,” are enough to make the flesh quiver, and to beget a “ fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

Nor are the following remarks less pointed and solemn :—

“ Are you a man ? God made you a man ; but you make yourself a beast. Wherein does a man differ from a beast ? Is it not chiefly in reason and understanding ? But you throw away what reason you have. You strip yourself of your understanding. You do all you can to make yourself a mere beast ; not a fool, not a madman only, but a swine, a poor filthy swine. Go and wallow with them in the mire ! Go drink on, till thy nakedness be uncovered, and shameful spewing be on thy glory !

“ O how honourable is a beast of God’s making, compared to one who makes himself a beast ! But that

is not all. You make yourself a devil. You stir up all the devilish tempers that are in you, and gain others, which perhaps were not in you; at least you heighten and increase them. You cause the fire of anger, or malice, or lust, to burn seven times hotter than before. At the same time you grieve the Spirit of God, till you drive him quite away from you; and whatever spark of good remained in your soul, you drown and quench at once.

“So you are now just fit for every work of the devil, having cast off all that is good or virtuous, and filled your heart with everything that is bad, that is earthly, sensual, devilish. You have forced the Spirit of God to depart from you; for you would take none of his reproof; and you have given yourself up into the hands of the devil, to be led blindfold by him at his will.

“Now what should hinder the same thing from befalling you, which befell him who was asked, which was the greater sin, adultery, drunkenness; or murder; and which of the three he had rather commit? He said drunkenness was the least. Soon after, he got drunk; he then met with another man’s wife, and ravished her; the husband coming to help her, he murdered him. So drunkenness, adultery, and murder went together.

“I have heard a story of a poor wild Indian, far wiser than either him or you. The English gave him a cask of strong liquor. The next morning he called his friends together, and setting it into the midst of them, said, ‘These white men have given us poison. This man,’ (calling him by his name) ‘was a wise man, and would hurt none but his enemies; but as soon as he had drunk of this he was mad, and would have killed his own brother. We will not be poisoned.’ He then broke the cask, and poured the liquor upon the sand.

“On what motive do you thus poison yourself? only for the pleasure of doing it? What! will you make yourself a beast, or rather a devil? Will you run the hazard of committing all manner of villanies; and this only for the poor pleasure of a few moments, while the poison is running down your throat? O, never call yourself a Christian! Never call yourself a man! You are sunk beneath the greater part of the beasts that perish.”

The above extracts are a part of a tract, entitled, “A Word to the Drunkard,” which was extensively circulated, and, I doubt not, was instrumental of rescuing many of that unhappy class of men.

I have already quoted the item in the General Rules, which prohibits buying, selling, or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of extreme necessity. At the organization of the Church, in 1784, in this country, the same rule was adopted, with the exception of the words, “unless in cases of extreme necessity,” which were omitted, so that the rule was more stringent than as it came from the hands of Mr. Wesley. And I believe the Methodist preachers of that day, and the people also, acted up to the requirements of the rule; for they have been made the “song of the drunkard” often for refusing to partake of the poisonous liquid when offered them, in the early days of their

ministry. After a while, however, they began to relax, and the rule itself was altered in 1790, by inserting the words, "unless in cases of necessity," and omitting the words, "buying or selling;" thus absurdly screening the seller and buyer, while it condemned the drinker! Thus the rule stood until the General Conference of 1848, when Mr. Wesley's original rule was restored to the Discipline, so that the Methodist Episcopal Church may now be considered a strict temperance society, prohibiting its members all use of spirituous liquors, except in cases of *extreme* necessity; by which I understand, that they are to be used only medicinally; in which way, like other drugs, they may sometimes be of service.

I have given the above facts for the purpose of showing, not only that Mr. Wesley and his compeers took the lead in the cause of temperance; but also to exhibit the manner in which the Methodists, in this country, vacillated from one extreme to another, until finally they have settled down upon the true principle; namely, a total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors, unless used as a medicine. It is, indeed, a fact, which I am almost ashamed to confess, that at the time the temperance reformation commenced, by the organization of the American Temperance

Society, notwithstanding our rule against the use of spirituous liquors, many of us, both preachers and people, were in the habit of drinking, if not to excess, yet drinking moderately, cider, beer, wine, and brandy; and the probability is, that had not the temperance measures been adopted, they would soon have been carried away by the flood of intemperance. The rule had become almost a dead letter, and the Church had fallen asleep upon this subject, so that the evil was creeping in, as it were imperceptibly, when the voice of warning was heard, deep and loud, sounding in our midst; this broke the dead slumber, and caused us to look around, to search our "Jerusalem, as with a lighted candle," and soon the "abomination which maketh desolate" was found lurking in the secret places of the sanctuary. From that time to this, we have been striving to banish the evil from the precincts of the Church; and it is confidently believed that the restoration of Mr. Wesley's original rule, and the steady efforts of God's ministers and people, will finally gain a complete triumph over alcoholic drinks; and, in conjunction with all others who are engaged in this noble cause, be instrumental in establishing the strict principles of temperance in every part of our land.

It will be perceived by the attentive reader, that there has been a mighty improvement since 1826, when the temperance reformation began its movements, even in the Methodist Episcopal Church. And herein I am glad to acknowledge our indebtedness to a Congregational minister, the Rev. Mr. Hewitt, whose name ought to be enrolled among the benefactors of mankind, for reviving the principles and practice of temperance, and thus beginning the work which has eventuated in so much good to the souls and bodies of men; and for urging upon the churches the indispensable duty of setting an example to the world, of a strict adherence to the principles and duties of temperance; while he and his friends must acknowledge that Mr. Wesley first broached the fact, that drunkenness was destroying its thousands; and that there was no other effectual way to save them from perdition, than by inducing them to break off from their sins by turning to God; by repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ; by which a thorough reformation would be effected—so thorough that the drunkard would become a sober, self-denying Christian.

We will acknowledge that these warnings of the founder of our Church had become indistinctly heard by many among us at the time

Mr. Hewitt began to lift up his voice in favour of temperance. But by whatever instrumentality the reformation has been effected, we rejoice in beholding this manifest improvement, not only among ourselves, but also among all denominations of Christians ; and I should deeply lament any relapse into the former practice of moderate drinking ; much more, should the same “excess of riot” be revived, either in the high or low places of our nation. And here I wish to record my solemn conviction, that the temperance reformation is to be ranked among the most important, because among the most useful, the most highly beneficial, and the most intimately connected with the present peace and prosperity of mankind, and with their future hopes and felicity, of any other cause whatever.

CHAPTER XV.

An apology—God the Fountain of all good—His servants to be esteemed—Disputes among Christians a hindrance to the Gospel—Evangelical Alliance—Mr. Wesley proposed its principles eighty-six years since—Extracts from his letter to the clergy on this subject—Produced no immediate effect.

I HAVE some fears that I shall fatigue the reader by extending these chapters to an undue length ; but I must beg his patience. As the naturalist

delights to trace a stream to its source, and the philosopher an effect to its cause, so does the Christian delight to trace the various philanthropic movements of the present day to their beginnings. In doing this I have no pride of sect to gratify—no human vanity to feed or inflame—nor yet any selfish ends to accomplish. “The good that is done upon the earth, God doeth it.” “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

But though God is the Fountain whence proceed all the streams of wisdom, truth, and goodness, with which the children of men are refreshed, yet the instruments He has seen fit to raise up, qualify, and send forth into his vineyard, are to be honoured by his Church according to their worth, and we are commanded to “esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake,” and to have them “in everlasting remembrance.” Some, indeed, while they profess a high regard for the honour and glory of God, endeavour to cover his most faithful servants with reproach, as though they reflected the glory of God by falsifying the character of his servants. Let such remember, that in loading his servants with reproach, they indirectly aim a blow at the Godhead, whose perfections are shadowed forth in his most faithful servants.

These are indeed the visible representatives of Jesus Christ, and therefore if we hate and persecute them, we thereby show our hatred to Him whose image they reflect.

One of the greatest hindrances to the spread of pure and undefiled religion, has been the animosity manifested by the professed followers of the Lord Jesus towards one another. Though this has not been more apparent among professed Christians, with the exception of those persecutions which have been fomented at different times by the Roman Catholics towards the Protestants, and by some Protestants towards other Protestants, than it has among the sects of philosophers, yet it has ever been seized upon by the enemies of Christianity as an infallible mark of the insincerity, or at least of the inconsistency of professed Christians; for these say, and say very justly, that while Christians profess a religion which breathes naught but love and good-will to men, they exhibit all the rancour of demons, slander and persecute each other in a variety of ways, and thereby give evidence that they are destitute of that very religion which they profess to believe in, venerate, and enjoy. Now it must be confessed that there is too much ground for this objection. Though it be true that the real disciple of Jesus

Christ, in every age of the Church, has furnished irrefutable evidence that love is the predominant principle of his heart, yet there have not been wanting fiery bigots, whose intemperate zeal has impelled them to acts of imprudence, of injustice, of persecution, by which they have disgraced themselves and the cause they professed to defend. These lamentable evils have always been a source of grief to the sincere follower of Jesus Christ, and have led him to "weep between the porch and the altar, and to say, Spare thy people, good Lord, and give not thine heritage to the heathen."

This state of things, and this view of the subject, have recently induced some of the evangelical Christians to adopt measures to remedy these evils, and to strive to bring all true lovers of the Lord Jesus into a closer harmony one with another.

Whether the "Evangelical Alliance" shall ever obtain a permanent existence or not, it has already produced a result highly beneficial to the interests of true religion. It has tended to soften the asperities of sectarian feeling, to pare down the pride of sect, and to make the different denominations feel that they are embarked in a common cause, and that therefore, notwithstanding they differ on minor points of doctrine,

and vary in their modes of worship, and their formularies of devotion, they agree in the fundamental truths of the Gospel, in all those facts and doctrines which are essential to salvation, and may therefore unite as "brethren beloved" in one common brotherhood, bound together in the strong cords of love and Christian fellowship. Having gained thus much, if the friends of the cause shall persevere in the same spirit of mutual good-will with which they have begun, they will acquire more and more strength, will commend their cause to the approbation of the good and pious of all orders, and thus be instrumental in diffusing the spirit of mutual forbearance, teaching all with whom they come in contact, that *Divine Love* "hopeth all things, beareth all things, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

But how has Methodism contributed to this result? To this I answer, that John Wesley was the first to broach the idea of uniting all the evangelical clergy in one common brotherhood, and that too on the very principles adopted by the Evangelical Alliance as the basis of its union. Under date of April 19, 1764, he says: "I wrote a letter to-day, which after some time I sent to forty or fifty clergymen, with the little preface annexed:—

*“Dear Sir,—*It has pleased God to give you both the will and the power to do many things for his glory; although you are often ashamed you have done so little, and wish you could do a thousand times more. This induces me to mention to you what has been upon my mind for many years, and what I am persuaded would be much for the glory of God, if it could once be effected; and I am in great hopes it will be, if you heartily undertake it, trusting in him alone.

“Some years since, God began a great work in England; but the labourers were few. At first those few were of one heart; but it was not so long. First one fell off, then another and another, till no two of us were left together in the work, besides my brother and me. This prevented much good, and occasioned much evil. It grieved our spirits and weakened our hands; it gave our common enemies huge occasion to blaspheme. It perplexed and puzzled many sincere Christians; it caused many to draw back to perdition; it grieved the Holy Spirit of God.

“As labourers increased, disunion increased. Offences were multiplied; and instead of coming nearer to, they stood farther and farther off from, each other; till, at length, those who were not only brethren in Christ, but fellow-labourers in his Gospel, had no more connexion or fellowship with each other than Protestants have with Papists.

“But ought this to be? Ought not those who are united to one common Head, and employed by him in one common work, to be united to each other? I speak now of those labourers who are Ministers of the Church of England. These are chiefly—

“Mr. Perronet, Romaine, Newton, Shirley; Mr. Downing, Jesse, Adam; Mr. Talbot, Riland, Stillingfleet,

Fletcher; Mr. Johnson, Baddily, Andrews, Jane; Mr. Hart, Symes, Brown, Rouquet; Mr. Sellon; Mr. Venn, Richardson, Burnet, Furly; Mr. Conyers, Bently, King; Mr. Berridge, Hicks, J. W., C. W., John Richardson, Benjamin Colley; not excluding any other clergyman, who agrees in these essentials,—

“I. Original sin.

“II. Justification by Faith.

“III. Holiness of heart and life; provided their life be answerable to their doctrine.

““But what union would you desire among these?” Not a union in opinions. They might agree or disagree, touching absolute decrees on the one hand, and perfection on the other. Not a union in expressions. These may still speak of the imputed righteousness, and those of the merits, of Christ. Not a union with regard to outward order. Some may still remain quite regular, some quite irregular; and some partly regular and partly irregular. But these things being as they are, as each is persuaded in his own mind, is it not a most desirable thing that we should,—

“1. Remove hindrances out of the way? Not judge one another, not despise one another, not envy one another? Not be displeased at one another's gifts or success, even though greater than our own? Not wait for one another's halting, much less wish for it, or rejoice therein? Never speak disrespectfully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other; never repeat each other's faults, mistakes, or infirmities, much less listen for and gather them up; never say or do anything to hinder each other's usefulness, either directly or indirectly? Is it not a most desirable thing that we should—

“2. Love as brethren? Think well of, and honour

one another? Wish all good, all grace, all gifts, all success, yea, greater than our own, to each other? Expect God will answer our wish, rejoice in every appearance thereof, and praise him for it? Readily believe good of each other, as readily as we once believed evil? Speak respectfully, honourably, kindly of each other; defend each other's character; speak all the good we can of each other; recommend one another where we have influence; each help the other on in his work, and enlarge his influence by all the honest means he can?

“This is the union which I have long sought after; and is it not the duty of every one of us so to do? Would it not be far better for ourselves? A means of promoting both our holiness and happiness? Would it not remove much guilt from those who have been faulty in any of these instances? and much pain from those who have kept themselves pure? Would it not be far better for the people, who suffer severely from the clashings and contentions of their leaders, which seldom fail to occasion many unprofitable, yea, hurtful disputes among them? Would it not be better even for the poor, blind world, robbing them of their sport,—‘O, they cannot agree among themselves!’ Would it not be better for the whole work of God, which would then deepen and widen on every side?

“‘But it will never be; it is utterly impossible.’ Certainly it is with men. Who imagines we can do this? that it can be effected by any human power? All nature is against it, every infirmity, every wrong temper and passion; love of honour and praise, of power, of pre-eminence; anger, resentment, pride; long-contracted habit, and prejudice lurking in ten thousand forms. The devil and all his angels are against

it. For if this takes place, how shall his kingdom stand? All the world, all that know not God, are against it, though they may seem to favour it for a season. Let us settle this in our hearts, that we may be utterly cut off from all dependence on our own strength or wisdom.

"But surely 'with God all things are possible;' therefore 'all things are possible to him that believeth;' and this union is proposed only to them that believe, that show their faith by their works. When Mr. C. was objecting the impossibility of ever effecting such a union, I went up stairs, and after a little prayer opened Kempis on these words:—*Expecta Dominum: Viriliter age: Noli diffidere: Noli divedere; sed corpus et animam expone constanter pro gloria Dei.* [Wait for the Lord: act manfully: do not distrust: do not give up; but constantly expose body and soul for the glory of God.] I am, dear sir, your affectionate servant. J. W.

"*Scarborough, April 19, 1764.*"

Here then is the very union among all the evangelical clergy, proposed by Mr. Wesley eighty-six years since, and which he tells us had long been on his mind. And though this earnest appeal to his brethren in the ministry was unheeded by most of them, yet the love that burned in his heart emitted a constant, even flame, irradiating in different directions, softening and illuminating all that came within its influence, until it led the several sects of evangelical Christians to make a mighty effort to bring all pure-minded men under its controlling power.

CHAPTER XVI.

The same subject continued—Difference between Wesley and Whitefield—Their interviews, in which Whitefield declines the proffer of union—More mature reflection altered his mind—The sentiments of Wesley embody the principles of the Evangelical Alliance—The author's publications on that subject—Divine love essential to constitute Christian union.

IN the last chapter I endeavoured to show that the principles of the Evangelical Alliance had been broached by Mr. Wesley in the early period of his ministry, and that he strove to exemplify them in his spirit and practice in every possible way. Perhaps no doctrine at that time caused greater uneasiness, or was the occasion of a sharper controversy, than the doctrine of high predestination, as taught by John Calvin and his followers. It was on this point that Wesley and Whitefield separated, being divided in opinion, though not in heart and affection—for they who knew each other's piety and integrity always loved one another "with a pure heart fervently"—and even went so far as to preach against each other's peculiar opinions. Notwithstanding this partial separation, such was the strength of his attachment to Whitefield, and his ardent desire to unite with him in the great work in which they were mutually en-

gaged, that Wesley wrote a letter to him, in which he made all the concessions a conscientious man could, and even went further than we could now do, to conciliate his brother in the ministry, that they might unite their strength and influence in opposing sin and winning souls to Jesus Christ. (*Wesley's Works*, vol. iii, p. 239.)

What effect this had upon Mr. Whitefield I cannot tell, but it is presumed that he remained in the same mind he before manifested towards his old friend and fellow-labourer in the Gospel field. What that was may be seen in the following extract from the Journal of Wesley: under date of Jan. 23, 1741, he says:—

“Having heard much of Mr. Whitefield’s unkind behaviour, since his return from Georgia, I went to him to hear him speak for himself, that I might know how to judge. I much approved of his plainness of speech. He told me he and I preached two different Gospels, and therefore he not only would not join with, or give me the right hand of Christian fellowship, but was resolved publicly to preach against me and my brother, wheresoever he preached at all. Mr. Hall, who went with me, put him in mind of the promise he had made but a few days before, that, whatever his private opinion was, he would never publicly preach against us. He said, that promise was only an effect of human weakness, and he was now of another mind.”

I have made this quotation to show the sin-

cere desire of Wesley to live in Christian and ministerial fellowship with Whitefield, notwithstanding he strongly dissented from him on some doctrinal points. It appears, however, that the latter rejected this brotherly overture, because he thought that Wesley, in opposing the peculiarities of Calvinism, thereby sapped the foundation of the Gospel. Time, and more mature reflection, however, convinced him of his error in this respect, and taught him to believe that even the Arminian Wesley could be a good man, for in his will he left a mourning ring for his friend, as a token of his indissoluble fellowship with him, and likewise requested that, if he should die abroad, he should be selected to preach his funeral sermon—with which Mr. Wesley complied.

This strong desire for a union with all the evangelical clergy was frequently expressed, and sometimes proposed in direct terms, but was uniformly rejected by most of them, the causes of which it is not necessary nor expedient now to trace. In Wesley's sermon, entitled "Catholic Spirit," he expatiates more largely upon this topic, showing that a difference of opinion on some speculative points of minor importance need not hinder that union which results from Divine love. He says:—

“ But although difference of opinion or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we may not be of one opinion? Without all doubt we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding their smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works.”

These sentiments embody, so far as I understand them, the principles which lie at the foundation of the Evangelical Alliance, and are to govern its members and friends in their intercourse one with another. Mr. Wesley did not ask those who differed from him in opinion on some speculative points of doctrine, modes of worship, or forms of church government, to sacrifice any of their peculiarities in order to form the union which he desired; provided they held to the Divine Head of the Church, believed in his sacrificial death, the necessity of the Holy Spirit to enlighten and convict the sinner of his sinfulness, to enable him to repent, to believe in Jesus Christ “with a heart unto righteousness,” and actually enjoyed the love of God and man in the heart, he was not barely willing, but intensely desirous to unite with them in extending the Redeemer’s kingdom among mankind.

And are not these the principles on which the Evangelical Alliance is founded? Hence Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Protestant Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodist Episcopalians, have agreed to sacrifice their respective peculiarities, to forego their sectarian partialities, without at the same time abjuring any part of their creeds, or altering their modes of worship, or abrogating any part of their church order or government, and unite on the broad basis of God's universal good-will to man, and in the sweet principle of brotherly affection: and though each may preach his own peculiar doctrine, and believe and practise according to his views of Gospel order and ordinances, he may nevertheless recognize in his brother of another denomination a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, engaged in the common cause of man's salvation; and they may strive *together* for the faith of God's elect, and to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." And as I have before said, if no formal alliance shall be permanently established, the effort that has been put forth, and the exertions which are now making to diffuse these catholic principles, and to stretch this bond of union around all loving hearts, have had, and still exercise a most salutary effect on the views, the hearts, and the

lives of all evangelical Christians who come within the range of this benign and heavenly principle.

I trust my readers will bear with me for introducing myself so frequently in these pieces, and attribute it to the right motive, as it seems to me necessary to illustrate my views, and show the consistency of my conduct. I have been a man of war almost all my days. I have fought the *Christ-ians*—the reader will put the emphatic accent on the first syllable, as the word designates a sect nearly allied to the Arians—the Hopkinsians, Calvinists, and Protestant Episcopalians; or rather have striven to defend the Methodists when they have been assailed by either of these denominations; but in doing this I have been generally careful to distinguish between what I considered the errors which I felt it my duty to combat, and the persons and Christian character of my antagonists; that while I would give no countenance to the former, I could fellowship the latter, provided only that their experience and life were in conformity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And though I will not attempt to justify every expression I may have used, yet upon a review of my life and writings, I can reflect with unspeakable satisfaction upon the motives with which I have

been actuated, and humbly adore the "God of all grace" for preserving me from indulging in any bitterness of spirit, or from feeling any other than love and good-will to my antagonists. For my numerous infirmities I have reason to be deeply humbled before God and man, and need continually the atoning merits of Jesus Christ to render either my person or works acceptable in the sight of God. I think, under the like circumstances, I should do the same again, notwithstanding my love of Christian union.

These remarks have been made for the purpose of introducing the following facts in respect to what I have done and written on the subject under consideration. In 1815 or 1816 I wrote a piece on Christian union among the different denominations, which was published in the Commercial Advertiser of this city, under an anonymous signature, embracing nearly the same principles as those embodied in the Evangelical Alliance. I saw soon after extracts from that piece in several papers, accompanied with comments favourable to the sentiments therein expressed; and the subject continued to be agitated until finally a small volume was published on the subject of Christian union, which doubtless led ultimately to the formation of the Alliance.

While editor of the Christian Advocate and

Journal, I think about the year 1830, I wrote an article on the same subject, which was copied into a religious paper in London, came back to New-York, was republished, I believe, in the Religious Intelligencer, and its credit given to the English paper. This error I corrected at the time, giving the true paternity of the article.

It is certainly matter of rejoicing to behold the different sects of evangelical Christians laying aside their warlike character, so far as denouncing each other merely on account of dissentient views of minor importance are concerned, and agreeing to unite their influence to push forward the great principles of Divine truth, to the utmost extent of their strength, to the utmost bounds of the earth. To do this effectually, there must be a union of heart, such a union as can be cemented only by the "love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." A union established merely upon certain leading principles, however true those principles are, will have no lasting effect. The heart must be imbued with holy love, which alone can beget a pure motive, and form the "single eye," the oneness of desire to promote the glory of God, among all those who would come into this union, or they never can work together for the faith of the Gospel. Oil and

water can as soon unite as an unconverted man can unite with a truly converted man. "Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good also." The heart must therefore be changed by the internal energies of the Holy Spirit, applying the merits of Jesus Christ, by which sin is washed away, and the soul is cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," in order to qualify a man to enter into that holy fraternity in which he can work successfully for the conversion of the world. This, and this alone, breaks down that supreme love of self by which all fallen men are distinguished, and which, so long as it predominates, prompts them to seek their own selfish ends, their own fame, riches, ease, self-aggrandizement, whatever may become of their neighbour; and so long as this selfish principle reigns in the heart, and thereby becomes a motive to action, the man can never unite to promote any object that has not this same selfish end in view. And how diametrically opposite is this from the principle that actuates the holy Christian! He strives in all his words and actions to promote "peace on earth and goodwill to men." Hence he is ready to unite his energies, to devote his time and substance, with all those of a kindred spirit, to advance the cause of Jesus Christ among men.

CHAPTER XVII.

A great reformation has been effected—So notorious that it is useless to contend with those that deny it—Former opposition to Methodism—Its causes—Pulpit and press against it—How met and removed—Southey's Life of Wesley contributed to make him better known—Wesley's Works published and read—These seemed to remove prejudice, as they were read by other denominations—Clarke's Commentary was published—Examined by other denominations—His learning and piety conceded—Its good effects—The hand of God shown in all these things.

WE have seen the influence which Methodism has exerted on the religious world, in producing those exertions in the missionary, tract, Sunday-school, and temperance cause, which have been beheld with exquisite delight by every pious mind, as well as in attracting towards each other all those whose hearts have been electrified by the fire of Divine love, which has been exemplified in uniting these together in extending the kingdom of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

That a mighty reformation has been wrought in these respects, less or more, among all denominations of Protestants, none competent to judge will attempt to deny. But should any one interpose his negation to this fact, I have nothing to say to him; for he that can summon

up courage enough to question its truth, will, with equal pertinacity, and imbecile ignorance, deny any fact, however notorious, which stands on the records of history ; and to undertake to answer such a “fool according to his folly” would be as great a waste of time and strength as it would be to attempt to silence the clamour of him who betrays his vanity and petulance by “answering a matter before he heareth it;” either of whom may well be left to himself, as being “wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.”

To those, however, who are dispassionate enough to judge impartially, and who have not committed themselves to an opposite theory, I will submit a few evidences of the fact in question.

The entire history of Methodism will show that in its commencement, and its onward progress, until within a few years, it was violently opposed, by profane wit, by obscene sarcasm, sometimes, indeed, by sober argument, but much oftener by ridiculous caricatures, by all denominations, with but few exceptions, Papists and Protestants. Much of this opposition originated from ignorance—ignorance of the doctrines we taught, of our motives and manner of life—while its great moving cause was that hatred found in every unrenewed heart to the pure

doctrines of Christ, and especially to that great and leading truth of Divine revelation, *justification by grace, through faith in the atoning merits of the Saviour of the world, and sanctification through the same medium.* This grand doctrine struck at the root of all sin, namely, unbelief. It proposed to tear up, root and branch, that infidelity of the heart which impels men—not to reject Divine revelation, for the devil himself cares not how many of his subjects thus embrace the truth of revealed religion, but—to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as an *almighty* Saviour, as a *present* Saviour, as *now* able and willing to “save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.” This cardinal truth of God the Methodists insisted upon with peculiar vehemence, and preached it because they professed to have an experimental knowledge of it in their own hearts. To maintain and to propagate this vital truth, and its correlatives, “love, peace, gentleness, goodness, joy, long-suffering, temperance,” including external obedience to the commands of God, they sacrificed ease and worldly honours, went out “into the highways and hedges,” persevered “through good and evil report,” not counting their “lives dear unto themselves, if they could win Christ, and be found in him, not having their own righteous-

ness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." In proclaiming this truth, urging it upon the people everywhere as a subject of personal experience, the evidence of which might, therefore, be tested by every believer's conscience—for they taught most distinctly and explicitly that the "Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God"—they met, as I have before said, with violent opposition, not only from the ignorant rabble, but from "priests and Levites." The pulpits rang with fearful warnings against the dangerous heresies of these wild and ignorant fanatics, those "wolves in sheep's clothing," as they were contemptuously called, "who would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect."

Not only the pulpit, but the press, was made to groan under the burden of the heavy complaints uttered against us. The pamphlet and the newspaper combined to blacken our character, to propagate the news of our heresies, and to render us odious in the public estimation. In the midst of all this opposition and obloquy, we held on our way, continued to preach the "same thing, and to mind the same rule." Some of the objections were answered. These answers were published. Our books were mul-

tiplied, and at length we seized hold of the periodical press, and this spoke out plainly and fearlessly, repelling the onsets of our antagonists, and stating our doctrines as they are, without reservation or disguise. This had the desired effect. The ignorant were enlightened, so that they could understand what Wesleyan Methodism is, and, when thus understood, it did not appear like that frightful monster they had been taught to believe it to be. Wesley's Works were published. His Journals, Sermons, Doctrinal Tracts, and miscellaneous pieces, were read by ministers of other denominations; and though they did not agree with him in all things, they formed a favourable opinion of his piety, began to relish his evangelical principles, and were struck with admiration at the immensity of his labours, and the wisdom of his plans.

Indeed, God seemed to make even the lukewarm and mistaken friends of Wesley contribute to exalt his worth. Southey may be considered as such; for I do not believe that he really meant to blacken his character. Being ignorant of that principle of Divine love by which Wesley was actuated, he, of course, could not understand the holy motive which guided all his actions, and, probably judging others by himself, he attributed to Wesley an unholy am-

bition to which he was an utter stranger. This led him to confound pure religion with enthusiasm, and, in fact, to caricature it. But he published the life of Wesley. His fame as a writer induced thousands to read it who had known nothing more of Wesley than what common report had told them. And even looking at him through this perverted medium, they perceived excellences which won their admiration. Their attention and curiosity were roused to look deeper into the subject; and the more accurately they searched, the more were they convinced of their former erroneous views of Wesley's doctrine, character, and modes of operation. In many instances their prejudices yielded to the force of truth, and were succeeded by a candid acknowledgment of the power of that genuine piety which dwelt in the heart, and was exemplified in the life, of Wesley.

Thus, through the misguided judgment of man, the wisdom of God shone out, and "turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," causing even the erring pen of Southey to portray the character of Wesley in such a light that its excellences shone all its imaginary deformities into darkness. This, indeed, was the fate, not only of the efforts of his mistaken friends, who misunderstood his character, and therefore placed

it in a false position ; but also of his avowed enemies, who designedly aspersed him, caricatured his theological sentiments, and vilified his motives and conduct ; for his defences, whether written by himself or his friends, triumphantly vindicated him against all defamers.

Other circumstances contributed to the same result. Clarke's Commentary was published. His fame as a scholar had preceded his Commentary on both sides of the Atlantic. When the Prospectus was issued for its publication in this country, in 1810, Dr. John Mason was requested to become its Editor. He replied, that he would do it from respect to its author, having formed an acquaintance with Dr. Adam Clarke in London, and therefore highly esteemed him as a man of profound learning and deep piety. This Commentary was subscribed for by ministers and others of different denominations, and I was told that several copies of it were taken at the Theological Seminary at Andover, in Massachusetts. How far this, and other occurrences, might have contributed to modify the divinity taught in New-England, I presume not to say ; but that it has undergone a very considerable modification within a few years past, is evident to every person at all acquainted with the history of the Congregational and Presbyte-

rian Churches ; so much so, as to split the latter into two parts, denominated the Old School and New School Presbyterians.

These, and other kindred publications, tended to make the Methodists better known; and though some of the doctrines set forth were sharply controverted by some, yet this fact is an evidence that they were read; and the very controversy itself contributed to make them more extensively known, and the more extensively they were known, the more highly they were appreciated; for the writers above alluded to were no novices in literature and theological knowledge; but some of them were thorough scholars, deeply read in the sacred Scriptures, and could therefore "bring from their treasury things new and old." Dr. Clarke, especially, was acknowledged on all sides to be a man of thorough and extensive learning, of solid piety, of high classical and scientific attainments; and though some affected to treat him with contempt on account of his peculiarities, and others strongly opposed him on those points on which he dissented from high-toned Calvinism, yet all were convinced that he was a commentator of eminent acquirements, of indefatigable industry, and thoroughly versed in Biblical literature. What renders his Commentary doubly valuable, in my

estimation, is, in addition to his able criticisms upon the original text, and his learned labours in philosophical, astronomical, and chronological researches, interspersed throughout his work, the deep vein of experimental and practical piety which runs through the whole, and gives thereby a sanctified aspect to the entire volumes. A work of this character could not do otherwise than produce a salutary effect, just as extensively as it was read and heeded. That it was extensively read we know, and that it was even critically examined by some, is demonstrated from the fruitless efforts made to overturn some of his positions; and, perhaps, there are those who are much indebted to him for light and information, who are unwilling to acknowledge the source whence they derived their knowledge. Be this as it may, Dr. Clarke's writings contributed to enlighten the Christian world on the subject of Wesleyan Methodism—for he was thoroughly Wesleyan in all his distinctive features—and thus to remove the unfounded prejudice which had been engendered against it by those who either misunderstood its character, or wilfully maligned it, from selfish or bigoted motives.*

* I must not be understood, from the above remarks, as endorsing all that Dr. Clarke has said, nor as acquiescing

How far these, and other causes, which were at work, have tended to effect a change for the better in the religious community, must be reserved for a future chapter. In closing this, allow me to say, that I have not adverted to the above facts with a view to exalt Methodism as such, but simply to show the hand of God in so directing the course of events, as to make even "the wrath of man to praise him," while "the remainder" of wrath he will restrain; for Methodism, simply considered as an *ism* of human contrivance, is of no more account than any other *ism* of the same origin; but it is because I believe it to be, in its origin and progress, the work of God, that I hail it as a messenger of "good-will to men."

in all his criticisms; though I think it highly becomes me to say, that when I find myself induced to dissent from such men as Wesley and Clarke, I generally pause, review my ground, and deliberate long and prayerfully before I make up a decisive judgment. Those whose fertile imagination and expanded understanding may enable them to decide upon every subject presented to them, without any painful thought, may dispense with this sober deliberation, and, bringing the previous question to their aid, may despatch the business with but a moment's reflection. For my own part, I profess no such intuitive knowledge, and therefore think best to search, review, revise; and more especially when I find myself in opposition to those giants in literature and science, of theological knowledge and experience, who have irradiated the world by their light.

If any are disposed to dispute this fact, namely, that Methodism was raised up, and has been thus far sustained by the good hand of God, and therefore is eminently his work; I hereby notify all such, that I am prepared to prove, by undeniable facts and irrefutable arguments, that it is so, though by no means exclusively so.

CHAPTER XVIII.

God the original cause of all good—At the time Methodism arose pure religion at a low ebb—It was hence violently opposed—The objections met and obviated—How—The cause steadily advanced—The doctrine of sanctification avowed—It spread among other denominations—Mahan and Upham advocate it with ability—The blessed effects of this—The opposition in a great measure ceases—All evangelical ministers are uniting—The names of several mentioned—Methodism contributed to this—The author disclaims bigotry—Confirms his love to all sincere Christians.

IN the former chapter we have examined certain causes by which Methodism has exerted a salutary influence upon the Christian community. These causes, however, considered in connexion with other agencies, are but effects,—as all secondary causes are—produced by the first cause. So Methodism, with all its adjuncts, instrumentalities, or means of operation, is but an effect of that grace of God in Christ Jesus, which wrought mightily in the heart of Wesley, his

coadjutors and successors; and this grace itself is the effect of the love of Jesus Christ, which caused him to die for the world; and the death of Christ, with the whole scheme of redemption and salvation, was the effect of God's unbounded love to a lost world—"God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He, therefore, who accuses me of dealing in trifles, because I treat principally upon effects, would do well to remember, that whatever subject is under investigation, considered relatively to the great First Cause, is but an effect, and an effect dependent upon an antecedent cause, which may often be too recondite, only as it may be referable to the original cause of all things, for human research to decipher.

But without contending on a point so plain, let us inquire into the influence which Methodism has exerted on the religious world in respect to experimental and practical piety. It will be acknowledged on all hands, I believe, that at the time Methodism arose, pure religion—experimental religion—the religion of the heart—that which is "spread abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," was at a very low ebb among all sects and denominations, both in Europe and

America. This has already been sufficiently demonstrated in my preceding chapter. Well, how is it now? Not only the doctrine of the new birth, or justification and its inseparable accompaniment, regeneration, but that of sanctification, has gained ground, not only among ourselves—as I humbly trust it has of late years—but among other denominations.

It is well known that this doctrine has met with more violent opposition from certain quarters than any other truth preached by us. To talk about being made “perfect in love” in this life, to be made “free from sin, properly so called,” however cautiously guarded and minutely explained, was considered, by most denominations, as among the wildest of fanaticism—as one of the most fatal presumptions that could delude the minds of mortals. It was in vain that we appealed to the sacred Scriptures, both of the old and New Testament, and to the experience and prayers of God’s people in every age of the Church, for the truth of this doctrine. It was opposed, and treated with contempt by all orders of Christians, and, I would charitably hope, chiefly because it was misunderstood by most of those who so violently opposed it.

To the objections that were seriously made, we answered. We produced proofs from Scripture

which declare, that "If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "What shall we say, then? Shall we live in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" These and the like texts of sacred Scripture were quoted and explained in conformity to Wesley's view of the doctrine, and quotations were made from his writings on this subject; his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection" was printed in a tract, and extensively circulated, in which he states the doctrine clearly, defining his meaning accurately, obviating objections, and showing the distinction between sin, properly so called, and those infirmities inseparable from human nature. The luminous writings of Fletcher were also widely circulated, and more especially those parts which treat upon this branch of Christian experience and practice. Others wrote, and in addition to arguments drawn from Scripture and reason, confirmed the truth by relating their own experience. A periodical, called a "Guide to Holiness," was and is published in Boston, Mass., in which various writers plead the cause of entire sanctification to God, while many relate their experience

of this great blessing. All these are so many streams issuing from the same fountain of Divine love, and flow forth to water Immanuel's land.

Nor have they lost themselves in the barren desert, or been absorbed in the sands of formalism, or yet confined their refreshing influences to our own enclosures. They have, in fact, overflowed the banks thrown around our own fields, and have watered the fields of our neighbours. As an evidence of this, I may mention the writings of President Mahan, of the Oberlin Institute, whose treatise upon this subject, in which he relates his own experience, clearly demonstrates his altered views in the right direction, and proves him to be a holy minister of the Lord Jesus, and an able advocate of the doctrine of Christian perfection. I should be ashamed to contend with him on account of some discrepancies between us of minor importance, so long as he holds fast, as I think he does, to the fundamental parts of Christian holiness, and recommends it as a subject of personal, heartfelt, conscious experience.

Professor Upham, also, whose writings in the department of Mental Philosophy have won for him a wide reputation, as an able and acute metaphysician, clothing his thoughts in language of classical elegance and chaste simplicity, has

dedicated his pen to this important subject, a subject of all others the most important to the best interests, present and eternal, of mankind. I have read his treatises with unmixed delight; and although I might not agree with him in all his phraseology, yet he certainly accords with the Methodists in all the leading particulars which go to make up the essence of the interior life, the life of faith, and the entire sanctification of the soul. And certainly he has the same right to select his own phraseology, provided he keeps to the Scripture standard, as I believe he does, as I have to adopt my own.

I cannot but consider the acquisition of such a man from another denomination, so widely known as a writer on metaphysics, so deeply read in the human heart, and in whose integrity all have the utmost confidence, as "great gain" to the cause of truth and holiness.

How many converts these two eminent men may have made I cannot tell. But they doubtless have exerted a powerful influence among their respective readers, and many would believe them whose sectarian prejudices would not allow them to listen to a Methodist writer. And it matters but little by what instrumentalities converts are made, so that they are converted to "the truth as it is in Jesus."

These facts prove most incontestably that experimental religion, in its deepest and most holy form, is on the advance among other denominations of Christians. I do not say that this doctrine of entire sanctification is generally received and taught by other churches. All I wish to intimate is, that it has attracted the attention of some eminent writers, who have heartily embraced it, and have, accordingly, recommended it to their readers, with all the ardour of sincere believers, and all the ability of acute and profound theologians; and that thus an entrance has been made into the citadel of prejudice, so that we may hope that it will ere long yield to the force of truth—truth plied by the hands of such men as Mahan and Upham, and others engaged in the same holy warfare.

But, though this grand doctrine of the Gospel is formally embraced by comparatively few of other denominations, yet it is evident as any demonstration in Euclid, that experimental religion, in the common acceptation of these words, has revived, less or more, among almost all orders and denominations of professed Christians. Time was, and that not long since, when the doctrine of the new birth, with the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, the witness and fruits of the Spirit, was ridiculed by many Protestant ministers as a

groundless fancy, having its seat in a heated imagination, and as only fit to delude ignorant fanatics, or to lead "silly women astray, laden with their sins." There were, to be sure, always some honourable exceptions to this heavy censure, but the generality were leagued against what now are popularly called "revivals of religion."

How is it now? Though there may be some who do not heartily embrace the doctrine above designated, and do not, therefore, zealously advocate religious revivals, very few, comparatively, will risk their reputation as Christian ministers by openly opposing them; while the great proportion, indeed all who may be rightly called evangelical, preach and pray for the revival and spread of inward and outward piety. I could mention a number of distinguished ministers, both in Europe and America, both in the island of Great Britain and on the Continent, in the Established Church of England and among the dissenters, in the Free Church of Scotland and among the Protestants of France and Germany, as well as among the Protestant Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, and the Congregationalists, in this country, who are zealously engaged for the promotion of experimental and practical piety, some of whom are adopting

every means within their grasp for its revival and diffusion, both at home and abroad. It might seem invidious to single out individuals as belonging to this class of evangelical ministers, but I can hardly deny myself the pleasure of mentioning a few of the most distinguished of their respective denominations, such as Baptist Noel, lately of the English Church ; Bickersteth, of the same Church ; Monod, of France ; Tholuck, of Germany ; D'Aubigné, of Geneva ; Wardlaw and Anderson, of Scotland ;* James and Jay among the dissenters of England ; M'Ilvaine and Potter, Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States ; Tyng, of the same Church ; Spring and Baird, of the Presbyterian Church ; De Witt, of the Réformed Dutch Church ; Stuart and Cheever, of the Congregational Church, and Cone, of the Baptist Church. These all, and how many others I cannot tell, agree in urging upon mankind the necessity of inward, experimental religion.

It must not be understood that I suppose that all these agree with us in many particulars,

* The late Dr. Chalmers exerted a powerful influence in favour of experimental religion while he lived, and his works are speaking for him since his death. His eulogy of Methodism—that is, “Christianity in earnest,”—has been often quoted.

which are considered of great importance, and about which we may innocently dispute; nor that they agree among themselves concerning certain rites and ceremonies, or on some speculative points of doctrine and church order; all I contend for is, that these, and others of a like spirit, will agree to disagree on those points respecting which they cannot think and believe alike, while they are prepared to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," as it regards the fall of man, the necessity of repentance, of faith in Christ, justification through the blood of Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of furnishing an evidence of the reality of this change of heart by a blameless life and conversation.

They may not agree with us in our definition of the new birth, nor accord to our phraseology concerning the direct witness, and its inseparable companion, the fruits of the Spirit; while respecting the thing itself, the reality of the new birth, or justification by grace, through faith, and regeneration, and that this is uniformly followed by obedience to the commands of God, I apprehend there is no essential or material difference; and that while we hail them as efficient co-workers in the Gospel field, they will allow that we are so far orthodox that they can

fellowship us as co-labourers in the same field. And if we are indeed in possession of that Divine love which is "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," as we unquestionably are if we are truly regenerated, and have received the "Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry, Abba, Father," though we may dispute on minor points, we shall dispute in love, not betraying that anger which stirs up strife, but exhibiting that "charity which is not easily provoked, is not puffed up, but is kind, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things."

Now, that Methodism has contributed much to bring about this altered state of things, is what I most conscientiously and most fully believe, and therefore hope I may not be accused of narrow-hearted bigotry for proclaiming the fact. At my time of life, there is but a slender motive for the indulgence of bigotry; and if at any time I may have been tinctured with it, the knowledge I have acquired from nearly fifty years' experience, among a people who have exhibited their full share of human infirmities, has had a great tendency to do it away; while the same knowledge enables me to say, with equal sincerity, that the great majority, both preachers and people, have been, and are now, striving to establish the cause of pure religion on the earth.

Yet if any contend otherwise, that this reformation has been effected independently of Methodism, and by other instrumentalities, I will not disturb either my own or his tranquillity by controverting the point with him, but will still rejoice in the knowledge of the fact that "Christ is preached, whether in pretence or in truth;" that his religion is prevailing among the apostate sons of men, by whatever instrumentality, whether by Methodists, Presbyterians, Protestant Episcopalians, Baptists, or Congregationalists, or whether by all and each of them. In this belief, and in this state of mind, I enjoy unspeakable satisfaction, and am prepared to unite with all those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," whether they stand or kneel in prayer, whether they pray with or without a book, whether they dress with or without a surplice, in extending the Redeemer's kingdom among men. If they treat me as a heretic I cannot help it. I may love them still, and that in spite of them. If my more immediate brethren think me too charitable, neither can I help that, nor does it diminish my affection for them. I must still enjoy the pleasing belief that the religion of love is advancing in the world.

CHAPTER XIX.

Influence of the Gospel—United influence of Christians—Experimental religion inseparably connected with keeping the commandments—The present state of the world highly favourable—Comparative view—Its former state—The patriarchal—Mosaic—Israelitish—The time of our Saviour—Church and State—The time of the Reformation—Later times—All worse than the present—Though many pure spirits were found in those times, yet their sufferings prove the general wickedness—Intolerance of Christians towards each other—These facts prove that the present are better than the former times.

I HAVE substituted the word *Gospel* for *Methodism*, for the purpose of comprehending the several denominations of orthodox Christians in the grand work of conquering the world to Jesus Christ. So far as they lend their influence in favour of experimental and practical religion, so far they work jointly in promoting the cause of man's salvation. And when I speak of experimental and practical religion, I mean to be understood as expressing something in opposition to mere formalism, to mere creeds and confessions of faith; for these, however orthodox they may be, do not constitute the essence of that religion of the heart which is comprehended in the phrase, experimental and practical religion; and I join these two together for the purpose of showing that they are inseparably connected; that wher-

ever this religion exists in the heart, it will show itself in the life ; for St. John says, " If any man saith that he loveth God, and keepeth not his commandments, he is a liar." The keeping the commandments of God, therefore, is, in the opinion of the apostle, a practical illustration of the love of God in the heart ; and by keeping the commandments he must have meant an outward obedience, else he did but use a senseless tautology, for he had already spoken of the internal principle by calling it " the love of God ;" and hence to say that he meant by " keeping the commandments of God," the same as having the love of God in the heart, amounts to this, and nothing more ; " He that saith he loveth God, and loveth him not, is a liar," which, though true in itself, would be such a mere truism as would have been unworthy of the lips of the apostle. His object doubtless was, to annihilate, with the single stroke of his pen, the Gnostic heresy, that all religion consisted in knowing God, so that, however vicious men's lives, if they did but know God as a God of love, they were nevertheless good Christians. In flat contradiction to this shameless heresy, the apostle affirms, " He that committeth sin," by not " keeping the commandments of God," " is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning."

It is in fact one of the most practical demonstrations a person can give of Gnosticism, to pretend that he can wilfully violate any precept of the moral code, as expressed in the ten commandments, and yet enjoy the love of God in his heart, for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

Having made these remarks, to prevent any one from supposing that I advocate a religion that is not an active principle, that does not exemplify itself by a righteous life, I proceed to show how this religion has contributed to effect that altered state of things in the world which is now beheld with such exquisite delight and glowing gratitude. To do this, however, we must glance at the former state of things, that our present privileges may appear the greater from contrast.

I presume to say that the world, taking that word in the most comprehensive sense, as including every part of the inhabited world, whether Pagan, Mohammedan, Catholic, or Protestant, never was in so favourable a state since the introduction of sin as it is at the present time, for the propagation of pure and undefiled religion. We may select any period we please in the history of the world for the comparison, and the scale will turn in favour of the present period. How soon was it after the sin of Eve and Adam

that the earth drank the blood of Abel, by the murderous hand of his brother Cain, and merely "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous?" And so rapidly had crime accumulated, that about the middle of the seventeenth century from the creation, God swept all the inhabitants, with the exception of eight persons, from the earth by an overwhelming flood. And who that reads the history of our race from that memorable period, but must be struck with seeing the abominations which prevailed among the great proportion of the inhabitants of our fallen world! Look at the history of Abraham, of Moses, of the children of Israel, and see with what virulent persecution, blood, and murder they had to contend!

How was it at the time our Saviour appeared in the form of man? Alas for the wickedness of the times! Trace the history of the Church established at Jerusalem till the time of Constantine, and what cruel persecutions and martyrdoms did the Christians suffer during all that period of above three hundred years! Crimes of the deepest dye stained not only the hands of the ignorant rabble, but disgraced forever the noblest of the nations, and stamped heathen Rome with everlasting infamy.

And what shall be said of the Church from

the time it was incorporated with the State, under the imperial banner? Instead of that being, as some have imagined, the happy era when the New Jerusalem came down from heaven to dwell among men, it was rather the hour when smoke issued from the bottomless pit, obscuring the peculiar glories of the Gospel, until they were finally enveloped in midnight darkness. No sooner were the bishops exalted to honour by the munificence of Constantine, whose conversion to Christianity was of a very doubtful character, than pride began to show itself, pompous rites and ceremonies were adopted, until, finally, step by step, Popery was established in all its unscriptural aspects, and its anti-christian features. Hence the dark ages of the Church, which lasted for nearly twelve centuries, during all which time, though there was doubtless here and there a pure spirit, and also small isolated communities, who sighed in secret over the abominations of the earth, yet the great majority were carried away with the floods of ungodliness, and pure religion was lost amid the whirlpools of human ambition, sensual pleasure, and worldly glory. So it remained until the Reformation commenced.

And need we any other evidence of the wickedness of the nations, from the time Wiclif arose in England, Huss and Jerome in Bohemia, Luther

and Melancthon in Germany, Calvin in Geneva, Knox in Scotland, Cranmer and his coadjutors in Great Britain, until the Revolution effected by the reign of William and Mary, in 1688, than to behold the opposition, the cruel persecutions, imprisonments, and deaths, which were inflicted upon all who dissented from the established religion? Even the soil of New-England, the land of the Puritans, was drenched with the blood of the Quakers, and Williams was banished from Massachusetts for preaching what he conscientiously believed to be the truth. Indeed the whole history of the Reformation, from its incipient steps down to its completion, is but a record of "wickedness in high places" on the one hand, and of patient suffering on the other; and no sooner did the Protestants obtain the dominion than they exhibited the intolerance of their spirit by persecuting those who dissented from them. So little was the spirit of religious toleration understood in those times!

If we come down to later times, we shall find the same evidences of the wickedness of mankind exhibited in their conduct one toward another. Not only among the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, but also in our own country, in the middle of the eighteenth century, during our revolutionary struggle, and for some time thereafter,

infidelity was rife in all our borders, profane swearing, drunkenness, and almost every abomination, infected nearly all ranks of society.

Now I do not mean to say that there were none righteous during all this time. Such a saying would be in the highest degree preposterous. We know that there appeared at different times, both under the old and new dispensations, some of the noblest spirits which ever adorned and dignified human society. And never did saintly virtue rise to a higher pitch, or shine out more brilliantly, than it did in some of the ancient patriarchs, in the primitive Christians, among the reformers, and among the Puritans and others. But what I mean to say is, that the very manner in which those saintly virtues were tested, the sufferings and the deaths which were inflicted upon those saints, prove to a demonstration that wickedness reigned triumphantly, and that in the most favoured times the principles of religious toleration were but imperfectly understood, and less exemplified in practice. The fires of persecution, among Pagans, Catholics, and Protestants, which burned so furiously against the minor sects, sending them to the prison, to the scaffold, and to the stake, attest the truth of the above statement, while, since the penal laws against dissentient Christians have been either repealed or

treated as a dead letter, the opposition which has been manifested against, and the ridicule which has been poured upon experimental Christianity by mere nominal professors of religion, show how unwilling such are that pure and undefiled religion should predominate in the hearts of men.

Nothing shows more strikingly the imperfect manner in which the true spirit of Christianity was understood than the fact, that no sooner did one sect gain the predominance in any country than it enacted and executed penal laws against all other sects, vainly supposing that conscience could be forced to acquiesce in the dogmas which it could not believe, and that the religion of love could be propagated "by knocks and blows." Thus, while Luther was contending against Leo X., Leo X. persecuted Luther; but when Lutheranism was established by law it could proscribe all others. While Calvin was contending against Romanism he cried out against persecution; but when Calvinism became predominant in Holland, it could condemn and proscribe the Arminians, in the persons of the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort. While Cranmer and his associates were labouring to effect a reformation in England, they were persecuted unto "the death" by their enemies; but no sooner was the Church of England established by law than it

turned persecutor of the Puritans, and all others who dissented from the religion of the State. And no sooner had these very Puritans established themselves in their new abode in the wilds of America than they turned around and persecuted the Quakers, and hung the witches.

I have alluded to these facts to show how very imperfectly the laws of reciprocal rights were understood by our ancestors, and how much they were under the influence of that ancient code, done away by our Saviour, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and governed by the false maxim, "that power gives right." Hence those exclusive laws which protected one sect and condemned all the rest. Hence also I say that the principles of toleration, which secure to all equally the right, and those laws which protect every one equally in the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience, were neither understood nor practised by any sect that happened to have the predominance in the state. Thank God! this age of intolerance is passed away in the great portion of Christendom, as well as in some heathen lands, and I humbly trust, nay, I fully believe, that it is fast passing away in those portions of the world where superstition and intolerance still reign. The illustration of this fact must be reserved for

a future chapter, and it will present one of the most cheering prospects, next to the heavenly vision, upon which the pious mind can possibly dwell. In the mean time let us adore the God of all grace for what he has done, and is now doing for the children of men.

CHAPTER XX.

The evils of civil or religious despotism—Altered state of things for the better—Produced by pure religion—The hand of God seen in this—Labours of Simpson and Buchanan, and other Missionaries—British and Foreign and American Bible Societies—All these tended to break down bigotry and establish a catholic spirit—The contrast between the present and former times striking—Bright hope for the future.

WE have taken a short survey of the state of the world, from the sin of Adam nearly to the present time, and have seen how generally wickedness prevailed, and more especially how the principles of intolerance were incorporated in all the religious establishments then existing. But since the beginning of the eighteenth century there has been a gradual improvement, until now the principles of religious toleration are more generally understood and exemplified in practice among the several nations of the earth.

What has produced this alteration for the better? To this I answer, and I believe it is the

only correct answer which can be given, *that it is the influence of Gospel truth upon the understandings and consciences of mankind*—that influence which penetrates the heart, converts the sinner into a saint, and makes him a “new creature.” When the sinner is thus created anew, the laws of God are written upon his heart, and that law which requires us to do as we would be done by, in a change of circumstances, exerts a controlling effect upon the conscience; and hence those who are governed by it can no more oppress their fellow-men, abridge any of their rights, or inflict pains and penalties for difference of opinion, than they can wish those acts of injustice should be visited on themselves. The light of this truth, reflected from the throne of God on the renewed Christian’s heart, is not confined there; its rays shoot forth in every direction, and the world around him becomes enlightened. And so the principles of civil as well as religious liberty have been widely diffused among the nations, by which means the bands of sectarian jealousy have been broken, denominational pride and bigotry have been, in a great measure, destroyed, and, as a consequence, civil despotism has lost its hold in many places, and is fast losing its hold in others. Through this benign influence the minds of states-

men have been enlightened, religious and civil bigotry has been weakened, and the principles of civil liberty have imbedded themselves in the human heart, and the folly of religious intolerance is seen in its own odious and hateful character.

It is easy to trace the hand of God in bringing about these delightful results. What a flood of light was shed on this subject by Simpson's "Plea for Religion," and how was this light increased by Buchanan's "Star in the East," in which is related how that intrepid missionary penetrated the dungeon of Romanism in Goa, in the Portuguese dominions in the East. Ward, Morrison, and Coke, and a host of other men of God, either went themselves, or were instrumental in sending others, to explore the dark dominions of superstition, error, and idolatry, and they sent back their reports of the sad state of things which they beheld, and called for additional labourers to enter the rugged field. They went at the call, and thus the missionaries of the cross visited almost every land and nation under heaven, at first indeed very timidly, finding a cautious prudence necessary, to prevent or allay prejudice, and to "prepare the way of the Lord" in those dense and dark wildernesses where the rays of Gospel light had not penetrated.

These missionaries of different sects and denominations, meeting together in foreign and heathen lands, soon felt the necessity of leaving their sectarian partialities and denominational peculiarities at home, for bigots to contend about, and of uniting their forces and combining their strength for one undivided onset upon the strongholds of sin and Satan. Having to combat the spirit of intolerance which they found reigning in Mohammedan and heathen countries toward Christianity, they saw its hateful character, deplored its withering effects upon the human soul, and lamented over those despotisms which had long bound the consciences of men in their "slavish chains;" and accordingly they set themselves at work to counteract its influence, by softening, through the bland truths of the Gospel, the hearts of the oppressors of mankind, and to plead for liberty to worship Him "who hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth," according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience.

Thus the labours of the missionaries contributed mightily to relax the hold by which intolerance had long held so many nations in bondage. They felt, indeed, that if it was wrong for Mohammedanism and heathenism to abridge their rights, it was equally wrong for Christians, so called, to proscribe each other;

and that, if it was essential for them, in order to pursue their high vocation with success among the heathen, to love one another, and to exemplify that love by a union of affection and effort, it was equally so among Christians at home. Thus the light of divine truth which shone upon their minds in heathen lands, by a reflex action, tended to enlighten the lands whence they came.

Almost simultaneously with these movements among the churches of Jesus Christ, the Bible Society commenced its operations, first in England, and then in the United States. At the formation of this society in England, the rare sight was beheld in its board of managers, of Episcopalians, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers, all uniting together to send the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, to all the nations of our globe. The same catholic spirit was exhibited at the establishment of the American Bible Society. And never, surely, was a fitter or broader platform laid for all sects to stand upon than that of a Bible Society so formed and conducted; for who that believes in divine revelation can withhold his assent from, or refrain from giving his hearty assistance to, an association formed for the purpose of inculcating, as extensively as

possible, that Bible which contains such a revelation in all its perfection?

That this noble and truly philanthropic institution has mightily contributed to do away denominational jealousies, and to pare off the sharp edges of sectarian rivalry, not only by uniting all the orthodox Christians in its counsels, and employing them as equally as may be in its agencies, but in distributing its Bibles among all classes that will receive them, whether infidels, Jews, Mohammedans, heathens, Catholics, or Protestants—excluding none from the embrace of its charity who will not exclude themselves—who will attempt to deny? What a monument of the most enlarged benevolence is this! What an honour to the Christianity of the nineteenth century! And what a demonstration of the catholicity of that religion which the Bible inculcates!

That the labours of these, namely, The British and Foreign, and American Bible Societies, and their various auxiliaries in Europe and America, have greatly tended to advance the cause of Christian liberality, to sap the foundation of religious intolerance, and thereby to open the way for the universal spread of the Gospel, who can doubt? Their boards of managers are composed of members of different churches, their

agents are ministers of several denominations, and thus Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Episcopalians fraternize together, and interchange—with the exception of the latter—each other's pulpits, particularly when they plead the Bible cause. This makes them better acquainted with each other, and consequently leads them more justly to appreciate one another's "gifts, grace, and usefulness."

But by whatever causes, means, or instrumentalities these happy results have been effected, the fact itself is indisputable, that such a reformation has been wrought among almost all nations, that those external barriers which originated from civil despotism and religious intolerance have been, in a great measure, removed, and that a way is thus opened for the feet of the missionary, with the Bible in his hand, the love of God in his heart, and the words of truth on his lips, to enter unmolestedly and proclaim "Jesus and the resurrection." What a revolution has thus been effected! And how striking the contrast between these and former days! Formerly, in every age, with but few exceptions, the minority was persecuted by the majority, and often the sincere Christian had to wade through rivers of blood in order to maintain his integrity, and arrive at the end of his

race. Now he passes along, not only in peace, but generally protected in his rights and privileges by the state in which he resides. Even in Mohammedan and heathen lands, the missionary is permitted to enter, to reside, to travel, to preach and pray, to build churches, to circulate the Bible, and to do all which the Lord his God has commanded him, without let or hindrance from any man.

Hence these men of God are scattered in Africa, in Asia, and different parts of Europe, in the islands of the seas, among the aborigines of our own country, and indeed in every state and kingdom under heaven, with the exception of those under Papal influence, and even in these the way appears to be preparing for the Lord in a very remarkable manner. In France, since the late revolution, and in other states of Europe, free toleration is allowed for all sects to exercise themselves, and to preach their respective peculiarities. In Palestine, the land where Isaiah sung and prophesied, where Christ, the Messenger of the new covenant, was born, preached, died, and rose again, and from which he ascended to heaven, but which has long been under the iron sceptre of Mohammedan despotism, even here in Jerusalem, around which cluster so many endeared recollections, is the

Gospel preached in its purity. In Constantinople, so long the "nest of every unclean bird," the "seat of the false prophet," Protestant missionaries are actively engaged in preaching the Gospel, and the Holy Scriptures are circulated. China, by a very mysterious providence, has opened her gates to the missionary of the cross, and he is entering them with words of peace on his lips. In fact, the whole land of the East, —once the theatre of so many astonishing events, that has furnished such varied themes for the poet, the historian, the antiquarian, the philosopher, whether heathen, Jew, or Christian— seems now opened, or opening, for the reception of Him who "bringeth glad tidings of great joy to all people."

Time indeed would fail me to undertake to enumerate all the instances which demonstrate the truth of the proposition, that the present days are better than the former. We may therefore say to those who question the fact, in the language of inspiration, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this," Eccles. vii, 10. Those who will take the trouble to contrast the present with the past, from the records of history, will be constrained to acknowledge that the pre-

sent is incomparably better in every respect, civilly, religiously, scientifically, artistically, agriculturally, and commercially; and if the Christian will be wise and diligent, he will find that he can use all these immense advantages for the glory of God, in the advancement of the Redeemer's cause in the earth.

Now I certainly envy not the heart of that man that can sit down and calmly meditate on this most desirable and delightful state of things, and not be animated with a bright hope in the future, and will not send up his grateful acknowledgments to the God of all grace for his manifold mercies. He that can, amidst these scenes—scenes which unfold the wisdom, power, and goodness of Almighty God so conspicuously and gloriously—indulge himself in repinings over the degeneracy of the age, and the desolations of the Church, instead of catching fire from the holy altar, and bursting forth in songs of praise and thanksgiving to God “for his wonderful goodness unto the children of men,”—why, I must leave him to his own musings, and join with all those of every name and order who will unite with me in ascribing “honour, and glory, and dominion to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever.”

CHAPTER XXI.

The author expresses his conviction in the validity of his conclusions—Former incredulity in chronological interpretations—Mr. Fleming's prediction of the downfall of the Pope in 1848—These opened new views—Wesley and Faber approximate near each other, and with Fleming—Causes of the difference—This difference being so small, confirms the truth of the prediction—All these things argue the near approach of the millennium—In what this is to consist—Further representations of Fleming—Final overthrow of the Pope in the year 2000—The reasons for this.

IF I have not very much misunderstood the state of things—and I have tried to be impartially accurate—the prospects before the Church are of the most encouraging character. I certainly have not intentionally allowed my imagination or my feelings to bias my judgment, but have endeavoured to draw all my conclusions from indisputable facts. I claim, however, no infallibility; and, therefore, if any one will convict me of error, in a Christian spirit, my acknowledgment shall follow such conviction just as speedily and frankly as I am capable of performing it.

For a number of years, my confidence has been very much weakened in the accuracy of the chronological commentators upon the prophecies of Daniel and St. John, because I thought

they had proved themselves false prophets, by the events not harmonizing with the predictions which they professed to found upon the prophetic Scriptures. About thirty years since, from reading Faber and some others, I spun out a fine theory for myself, with which I was much pleased for the time, and could dilate upon with great delight; but soon events occurred which tore my theory into fragments, and I was forced to abandon it as utterly untenable. And surely the late frenzied delusion, conjured up by the disordered imagination of Miller, by which so many weak but honest minds were maddened by the wildest speculations that ever bewildered and bewitched the human soul, and all professedly founded on the chronological prophecies of Daniel and St. John, has had no tendency to remove my perplexities, or to strengthen my faith in the truth of these prophetic interpretations.

Nor do I now pretend to have arrived at any sure data on which to found an undoubted confidence in the interpretation of these mysterious prophecies. But on looking over, a short time since, Benson's Commentary on the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, I found he quoted a passage from the writings of Mr. Fleming, in which that eminent commentator, in his inter-

pretation of this prophecy respecting the woman fleeing into the wilderness, where she should be fed twelve hundred and sixty days, predicted, from a chronological calculation derived from this symbolical representation, that the Pope should be put down in 1848. Mr. Fleming wrote his Commentary upon the book of Revelation in 1701, just one hundred and forty-seven years before the event took place. This remarkable coincidence, I must confess, struck me with great force; for we had just been informed that Pope Pius IX. had fled from Rome to Gaeta, in the kingdom of Naples, and subsequent events have attested the fact that the Provisional Government of Italy had deposed the Pope from all his temporal power.

This opened a new scene for reflection. I recollected that Faber, predicating his calculation of the same symbolical prophecy, had predicted the overthrow of the Pope in 1866, and that Wesley, borrowing from Bengelius, had intimated that the same event would occur in 1836.

These men of God differ thus in respect to the time of the overthrow of the Popedom, on account of their disagreement as regards the time of the commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty days, Faber placing it in six

hundred and six ; and Wesley not only dissents from Fleming and Faber, both in his date of the commencement of the important era of the woman's fleeing into the wilderness, but also in the length of the time of the twelve hundred and sixty days, making it extend from about 800 to 1836. The reason why Faber differs from Fleming is, that the former reckons a day for a calendar year, and thus, by adding twelve hundred and sixty years to six hundred and six, brings the fulfilment of this chronological prophecy down to 1866 ; while Fleming makes them prophetical years, which leads him to deduct eighteen from the calendar years,* and thus to bring it down to 1848. This sym-

* The difference between a prophetical and a Julian, or calendar year, consists in this—a prophetical year is made up of twelve months, of just thirty days each month, making three hundred and sixty days in the year ; while a Julian year includes twelve months of different number of days, as thirty, thirty-one, twenty-eight, with the exception of leap-year, when February has twenty-nine days ; so that a Julian, or our common year, has three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, forty five and a half seconds. This, by leaving out the fractions of minutes and seconds, will make a difference, in eighteen hundred and sixty years, of about eighteen years. It is by this mode of calculation that Mr. Fleming, deducting eighteen from twelve hundred and sixty, and adding the twelve hundred and forty-two to six hundred and six, terminates the reign of the Pope in 1848 instead of 1866.

bolical language has been doubtless used that its meaning might be understood only by the coming to pass of the events. And I certainly shall not add to the immense pile of baseless conjectures which has been accumulating by the folly or presumption of fallible men, who have vainly attempted to draw aside the veil which hides futurity from human view, by trying to unfold the meaning of a prophecy before its truth is declared by its fulfilment. On the contrary, wisdom would seem to dictate the propriety of waiting patiently for time to develop that hidden meaning of those prophecies which is now wrapped up in that symbolic language which is hard to be understood, and which seems to have been so recorded for the express purpose of preventing vain mortals from knowing those things which are in future, that they may attend more diligently to those which God hath revealed, as the object of their faith and the measure of their duty.

In the mean time we may remark, that the "signs of the times," which now appear in the political and religious horizon, seem to indicate the near approach of that day, when the kingdom of the Lord Jesus "shall extend from the river even to the ends of the earth;" when the "stone that was cut out of the mountain without

hands, shall break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold ;” and when the “great God” shall establish his kingdom universally among men, and Jesus Christ shall reign “God over all, blessed forever.”

I say, the signs of the times seem to indicate this. Look at the free toleration for the propagation of the Gospel already noticed, among almost all the nations of the earth. As God anciently overruled the wickedness of Pharaoh, of Sihon, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Cyrus, and a thousand other rulers of men, to subserve his purposes of wisdom, truth, and goodness, to the children of men, so he has been “preparing the way of the kings of the earth,” by the wars in Europe, occasioned by the revolution in France in 1789, from which sprang Bonaparte—one of the most renowned warriors of the world—and his veteran generals, for the development of his own benevolent purposes of mercy, and for the final establishment of the kingdom of his Son on the earth. How marvellously did the providence of God manifest itself in overruling the attack of the British arms upon the Chinese, which, to all human appearance, was an act of flagrant injustice, so as to make it eventuate in such a treaty of peace as should secure the free entrance of missionaries into that populous and

superstitious empire! And wherever the British government holds sway in the East or West, there freedom of conscience in religious matters is secured to the people. In this light, what a blessing to the world is that government, with all its imperfections! May it not abuse its powers by becoming intolerant, but so use its dominion, as to fulfil its high trusts for the advancement of true religion!

But what an opening does this present for the spread of the Gospel! And how animating the prospect when we look abroad—East, West, North, and South—and behold everywhere “the fields white for the harvest!”

Nor must we forget, or overlook, our own happy country, as one of the agents in effecting this glorious revolution. The principles of civil and religious liberty, early planted in these feeble colonies, continued their heavenly influence, until the eventful period arrived which declared and achieved our independence. Since then what wonders has God wrought in this and other countries! Here especially have those principles grown to maturity, and they have affected, less or more, all the kingdoms of Europe; and they will continue, I most devoutly pray, to diffuse themselves more and more, until the despotisms of the old world shall be annihilated,

and all men everywhere may sit down “under their own vine and fig-tree,” and worship God without any other restraint than what the word of God imposes upon an enlightened understanding and a well-instructed conscience.

Now, take all these things into the account, and then connect with the pleasing view the facts heretofore stated, namely, the exertions which are now making, by nearly all denominations of Christians, both at home and abroad; by building churches, filling the pulpits with holy and spiritual ministers; by sending out missionaries into every land, to which access can be had; by circulating the Bible in almost every language and dialect under heaven, and the increased spirit of holiness, of holy living and acting; and then let us ask ourselves, whether we have not abundant reason for believing that God is about to take to himself his great power, and reign universal King on the earth?—in other words, whether he is not, even now, ushering in the millennium, as it has been not unaptly called, from the “thousand years” of Christ’s reign, mentioned in the Revelation?

Let us not, however, deceive ourselves by anticipating an imaginary millennium. I do not believe—and the reasons for this unbelief are

too numerous to mention here—(See Appendix No. 2)—either that Jesus Christ will ever appear personally among men on this earth, or that such a time will ever come, before the “new heavens and new earth” shall be formed, as that all and every one of the inhabitants of our world shall be really and personally righteous; and that, consequently, all wickedness shall be swept from among men. But I believe the millennium that we are authorized to expect, is such a one as shall put “down all rule and authority” but such as is according to godliness, or such as Christianity shall sanction; that all false systems of religion, and unrighteous civil governments, shall be destroyed, so that Christianity shall be the only religion professed by any people or nation; that thus an offer of life and salvation shall be freely and fully made to every living man and woman, upon the terms of the Gospel; so that if any perish in his sins, it will not be because he was born a Jew, a Mohammedan, or Heathen, but only because he willingly and wilfully refused to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world.

When this period shall have arrived, and the Gospel has been thus preached among all nations, I believe the end of the world will come;

and then "he that is holy shall be holy still, and he that is unholy shall be unholy still." I believe that the commencement of this happy period is nigh, even at the door, if it be not indeed already begun.

Since the remarks upon Fleming's interpretation were written, I have, through the kindness of a friend, procured a copy of his work, and find that he calculates the complete destruction of the Papacy in the year 2,000, from the fact that the Pope was not invested with the full title of Universal Bishop until 758, under the reign of the emperor Pepin. According to this, the Papacy may be gradually wasting away, under the unerring, but just hand of Divine Providence, overruling the events of the world, and causing them to crush by slow degrees the power of the Pope, both in its head and limbs, until the time predicted shall come, when the entire fabric, as such, shall be destroyed. Though, therefore, it be true that Mr. Fleming predicted the fall of the Pope in 1848, and though we have seen this literally accomplished, so far as respects his temporal power, he yet retains his spiritual office as bishop, and may continue to exercise it for one hundred and fifty-two years, or until the two thousandth year of the Christian era.

I merely give these facts as the result of Mr. Fleming's calculations, without uttering any opinion respecting their truth. Time will develop all these things in the due course of events. We may therefore safely wait for this infallible interpreter of the mysteries of Divine providence to unfold the meaning of the prophetic Scriptures, and make everything plain. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," applies with equal force to all those future events which are wrapped up in the darkness of a hidden providence, as it did to the question of the disciples, when they asked the Lord Jesus if at that time he would "restore again the kingdom to Israel."

CHAPTER XXII.

The millennium near at hand, though much remains to be done before its realization—The present state of the world—1,000,000,000 its estimated population—One-third only of these are Christians—the others Mohammedans, Pagans, and Jews—Probably two-thirds of the Christians either Roman Catholics or Greeks—Among the 70,000,000 Protestants, not over 3,500,000 real Christians—Look at China—At Africa—At Europe—Prospects gloomy—State of the Protestant world—Evils of Church and State—Look at America—Gloomy state of South America and Mexico—Glance at the conquest—The United States—Here things more favourable—Much remains to be done—Calculation of the time for the general spread of the Gospel—The holy Christian fixes his faith on the promises of God—Present facilities for the spread of the Gospel.

I HAVE intimated that the time is drawing nigh for the millennial glory to be ushered into the world. I do not wish, however, to be misunderstood upon this subject. Though the time of its commencement may be near at hand, if indeed it has not already begun, it may nevertheless be a long time, as we measure time, in progress, and that time will be long or short, according to the rapidity with which the work is pushed forward. But whether the time be long or short, and whether the spiritual reign of Christ on this earth be a thousand or ten thousand years, it is most manifest that a great work remains to be done before that happy consummation shall be fully realized.

To be convinced of this, let us look at the present condition of the world in respect to the actual state of pure and undefiled religion. Though it is highly favourable as it regards the prevalence of civil and religious liberty, and therefore for the revival and spread of evangelical piety, yet the greater portion of the world is still under the power of sin, superstition, and idolatry, which even now overspread more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of the earth, while among those who profess a belief in Christianity only a small minority are genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

It is estimated that there are now about 1,000,000,000 of inhabitants on our globe. (See Appendix, No. 3.) Out of these 1,000,000,000 there are only about one-third, or say 300,000,000, that even profess the Christian religion. The other two-thirds, say 700,000,000, are either Mohammedans, Jews, or Pagans. Among those who profess a belief in Christianity, more than one-half, some say two-thirds, belong to the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. Among those denominated Protestants, numbering about 70,000,000, probably not over one in twenty, that is, about 3,500,000, have an experimental knowledge of God by a living faith in Jesus Christ. I do not say that all the rest are re-

probates. There doubtless might be found those among the different sects, unknown to all but God, who conscientiously improve the light they have ; who, not having the written “ law, do by nature the things contained in the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another ;” for “ in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him.” Such are saved through the merits and mediation of Christ, though they never heard of him, just as infants and idiots are saved by His merits, though incapable of believing in Him “ with a heart unto righteousness.”

But leaving these out of the question, let us for a moment consider the great work to be accomplished before Christianity shall be universally established. Look at the vast empire of China, containing probably 150,000,000 of inhabitants, all, with but few exceptions, bowing down to idols, which can neither hear nor speak. What a mighty mass of corruption, of superstition, and idolatry to be removed ! Persia, the land of Palestine,—the exact number of their inhabitants I cannot tell,—and other countries of Asia, are still under the dominion of Mohamme-

dan imposture, Jewish prejudice, or pagan superstition. And these false systems of religion are strengthened in the hearts of the people by the manner in which they administer to their sensual indulgence. These countries indeed present an arid waste, a barren desert, with here and there a green spot, which has been cultivated by the missionary, and which, like an oasis in the sands of Africa, affords the Christian pilgrim a means of refreshment to his weary spirit.

Look at Africa, though never thoroughly explored by the scientific traveller, containing probably 90,000,000 of souls, with the exception of here and there a Christian society, all under either Mohammedan delusion or pagan idolatry, many of whom are as ignorant of God, and the arts of civilization, as her Sahara desert is destitute of vegetable life. Though some few of her numerous tribes, who inhabit the seacoast, have embraced the Gospel, and though a Christian colony is rising in Liberia, yet the great proportion of her vast population are given up to all the corruption peculiar to Mohammedan and heathen principles and modes of worship. Egypt, the cradle of the arts of civilized life, and once the seat of a Christian bishopric; Carthage, formerly the city of refinement, of literature, and

the arts, and once the theatre of Christian polemics, now in ruins ; Ethiopia, once famous for its attachment to Christian worship ; Hippo, celebrated in ecclesiastical history as the seat of Augustine, a Christian bishop—all these places, with hundreds of others, included within the domains of Africa, have become the “habitation of the dragon, a nest for every unclean bird,” or, in other words, are given over to a bewildering delusion. And as to the interior of Africa, no man knows its condition, for it has never been fully explored. What a mighty work is to be done here before Christ can reign in the hearts of the people, and subdue them to himself !

Nor do many parts of Europe, though nominally Christian, present a much brighter prospect. In France, Austria, Italy, Naples, and some other minor kingdoms and principalities, the Roman Catholic religion predominates ; while Russia, containing upward of 56,000,000 souls, is mostly under the hierarchy of the Greek Church. And though we may hope that in these Churches, in which the cardinal truths of divine revelation are maintained, there may be found some pious souls, who, like De Rente, Madame Guion, Fenelon, and a Kempis, “worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the” fleshly ceremonies with which their religious systems are surround-

ed and encumbered, yet we know that infidelity abounds in their midst, that sensuality debases the great mass of priests and people, and consequently that purity of heart and practice is rarely found among them.

And what shall we say of the Protestant world in general? Do the professors of this form of Christianity, generally speaking, afford any example to their Catholic or Greek neighbours of a superior cast to induce them to change their Catholicism for Protestantism? I fear not. I greatly fear that, on a comparison of those countries where Protestantism is established by law, where Church and State are united, and where of course religion is supported by the state, there has been but little of the genuine spirit of Christianity to commend it to the acceptance of either Catholics, Greeks, Mohammedans, or pagans, until quite recently, and this has been produced by the bland influence of the Gospel, as preached and exemplified by the dissentient sects of Christians, and that too in opposition to the power and influence of the predominant religion—the same overbearing spirit of intolerance, the same disregard to honour and justice in their intercourse one with another, the same spirit of intrigue, of war and bloodshedding, have been exhibited by Protestant nations, and even by

Protestant denominations, as have been heretofore manifested by Catholic kingdoms, or even by heathen nations. Is it any wonder, then, that Catholics and heathens should have imbibed an inveterate prejudice against Protestants? Thank God that a brighter day seems to be dawning upon some portions, at least, of the Protestant world.

Our remarks, so far, have had reference to the state of things in Asia, Africa, and Europe. How is it in America? As to Mexico and South America, so far as pure religion is concerned, and the general state of morals, there seems to be nothing to relieve the general gloom. What cruelties were perpetrated by the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and South America toward the hapless natives of these countries! To convert them to Christianity, their inhuman conquerors held the crucifix in one hand, and the sword in the other, commanding them to bow and kiss the crucifix, or feel the point of the sword. And when *thus* converted, they were reduced to a state of vassalage more degrading than that of the negro slave in our own country—they were instantly doomed to all the drudgery of working the gold and silver mines of the country, tilling the soil, or otherwise performing menial services for their haughty conquerors.

What has been the result of all this ? Alas for the state of religion and morals in those ill-fated countries ! Intolerance reigns triumphant, vice of almost all sorts degrades both the clergy and laity, while sanguinary wars have drenched the soil with human blood. A land blessed with a genial climate, a rich soil, many of its mountains and rivers impregnated with silver and gold, and yielding every vegetable fruit almost spontaneously, cursed with a system of religion as heartless as that of the Hottentots, with a tyranny as relentless as the Turkish, and with morals as low as the haram of Constantinople ! Is this picture too highly coloured ? Let the records of the conquest and its subsequent history answer. It would seem indeed as if a reaction of Divine Providence was exemplified toward the states of South America and Mexico, in punishment of their treacherous cruelty toward the natives—natives whom they inhumanly butchered, conquered, enslaved, and converted to the Catholic faith by a process as unlike the apostolic example as the Koran is unlike the Bible. Hence the command issued respecting another people, “Give them blood to drink, for they are worthy,” seems to have been executed upon them. Ever since the revolutions which emancipated these provinces from the dominion of Spain, there has been

revolution after revolution ; one chieftain rising up and supplanting another, and, in achieving his object, shedding the blood of the unhappy people like water. O God ! how long shall this be ?

They are nevertheless objects of commiseration, and demand the pious exertions of the Christian missionary. The way, indeed, seems to be opening for the entrance of the Gospel into that land of superstition, where the people have been taught to worship the Virgin Mary as the mother of God, and to eat the wafer as the real soul, body, and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ !

How is it in the United States ? Every man is supposed to be partial to the land of his birth, the land of his forefathers, the home of his childhood and manhood. Making all due allowance for this partiality, I presume to say that there is not, nor ever has been, any country so favourable to the spread of the Gospel, and for the establishment of Christian and benevolent institutions, as the United States. Here the tree of liberty was early planted ; here it has been watered, nursed, and pruned ; here it has accordingly grown and flourished, until its spreading branches have extended all over our free soil, so that under its umbrageous foliage the weary sons and daughters of men may shelter themselves, while the stormy blasts are passing over the old world.

Here also the Church of Jesus Christ was early planted, and it has imparted its sap to nourish the tree of liberty, and they have mutually supported and fed each other, and they are now calmly reposing under the shadow of His wing which formerly sheltered the children of Israel in the wilderness.

But even here, under all these advantages, there are many vices to correct, and much infidelity to be conquered. The aborigines of our country are to be reclaimed, converted, and civilized; the slaves are to be emancipated and saved; and though the good work of converting the natives has been begun with encouraging success, there remains much to be accomplished before the "wilderness shall blossom as the rose." But I need not speak more particularly of the state of things here, as it is generally understood by most of my readers, and it has been sufficiently adverted to in my former chapters. It only remains, therefore, for the evangelical denominations to exert themselves *unitedly*, with becoming diligence and exemplary piety, that they may secure a complete triumph to pure Christianity in our own happy land.

The above imperfect view of the state of the world will show what Christians have to do before the "new heaven and the new earth" are

created. And they may make a calculation, if able, from what has been done, and is now doing, and strive to ascertain how long it will be before that grand event shall arrive. But such a calculation would present too slow a process, and too discouraging a prospect, for the lively and strong faith of the holy Christian to look at. He derives his faith and founds his hope, not merely on past events, on the history of what God has heretofore done, but more especially on what God has promised to do, and from what arises out of the present aspect of things. Such a time as the present never before was beheld by mortal man. Not only the general state of the world is favourable for the advancement of pure religion, but everything in the civilized world seems to favour the progress of the Gospel. Steamboats, railroads, the electric telegraph, all facilitate, not only commerce, political and artistical knowledge, but may be made subservient to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Never was there a time when it could be said with so much truth, to the missionaries of the cross, "Go, ye SWIFT messengers," to every part of the habitable globe, as the present. Never was there a time like the present when the flying angel mentioned in the Apocalypse could so literally fulfil his high mission, by "FLYING in the midst of heaven, having

the everlasting Gospel to preach unto" the dwellers upon the earth, in the seas, and the islands of the seas. News may be spread with the speed of lightning, and the "swift messengers" may go with all the velocity of steamboats and railroads from land to land, from island to continent, and everywhere proclaim the glad news of salvation.

In my next I shall endeavour to present some more facts to show the encouraging prospect arising out of the present movements in the Christian world for the general spread of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Statement of particular facts—These prove that evangelical religion is reviving—European revolutions favourable to religious toleration—Extracts of letters from Italy—from Switzerland—from Hungary—from Germany—These all indicate a revival of godliness—Meeting of evangelical ministers in Wittenberg—A spirit of union prevails—These facts prove that pure religion is advancing—The fire of Divine love will burst forth suddenly, and consume all before it.

IN addition to the general view presented in my last, I wish to state some particular facts, for the purpose of strengthening the faith and animating the hope of the sincere Christian. These facts arise out of the movements which are making in

different parts of the world in favour of pure, heart-felt religion.

The revolutions which have occurred during the past few years in France, in Germany, Prussia, and Italy, have all been favourable to the principles of religious toleration, and of course to the propagation of evangelical religion. Hence in Hungary, in Germany, in France, and even in Italy, in Rome itself, the very seat of the Pope, as well as in Switzerland, evangelical ministers have risen up in the strength of God, and proclaimed aloud, for a time at least, the pure truths of the Gospel. It would appear that there was a general and simultaneous impulse felt among the different bands of pious Christians in favour of experimental and practical piety.

In confirmation of the truth of this statement, I will quote the following extracts from correspondents who write for the "Christian Union," a periodical published under the patronage of the American branch of the Evangelical Alliance—a work intrusted to the immediate editorship of the Rev. Dr. Baird, whose catholic spirit commends him to all sincere Christians as a "brother beloved," and guarantees the character of the work he edits, as containing nothing inconsistent with impartial truth and brotherly affection. A correspondent, writing from Florence, after

making some general remarks on the state of things in Italy, says :—

“ That which impresses me most favourably, upon my inquiries into the religious affairs of Italy, is a manifest awakening among pious Protestants throughout the country, in reference to their duty towards Romanists. I believe this to be a revival of the spirit of CHRIST in their hearts, because it expresses itself in great charity towards the misguided people ; in judicious efforts to enlighten them, and reach their consciences by truth, without drawing them into ecclesiastical controversy ; and in prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon themselves as well as others. I frequently hear, from persons not interested in the conversion of Romanists, the most contemptuous remarks in reference to our Protestant efforts, and the accusation of bitterness and intolerance brought against the agents in them. But such persons are strangers to the little reunions where these matters are discussed. Would they but attend one such gathering, or converse to the point with individuals engaged in these movements, they would very quickly feel their own spirit reprov'd in reference to both parties. Such I have known to be the case in more than one instance.

“ At all the reunions which I have had the pleasure of attending in Italy, and also in conversation with members of different Protestant communions, I have been impressed with the evidence that God is moving upon the hearts of his children here to make them of one mind and spirit in view of the coming of his kingdom.”

This proves that a spirit is stirring the hearts of Christians in Italy, which, if it be not repress-

ed by the hand of bigoted intolerance on the one hand, nor smothered by dead formalism on the other, nor yet kindled by the fire of bitter zeal against Roman Catholics, will yet burst forth in flames of divine love towards all men, and evince the purity of its source and the strength of its principle in acts of beneficence to the souls and bodies of men.

Another correspondent writes as follows concerning the state of things in Switzerland. After giving a short account of the hypocrisy manifested by most of the professors of religion, after the establishment of the national Church, in stigmatizing the "true believers as *Mômiers*, or in more polite terms, *Methodistes*," the writer adds the following remarks :—

"You must not suppose, however, that everything is dark and gloomy in the present condition of the Canton of Vaud. That God who can draw good out of evil, and has promised to be with his children even unto the end of the world, has not left himself without witnesses here. If the men of the world are exhibiting more and more plainly the materialism by which they are guided, the little flock of the Lord Jesus Christ, following in the footsteps of their Divine Leader, are daily evincing an increase of love, faith, and knowledge. The Free Church—although oppressed, deprived of all liberty and publicity in the services of divine worship, compelled in most of the parishes to assemble in secret for prayer and preaching, separated from its chosen pastors, who are dragged

away like criminals by the soldiery of the State—is nevertheless prospering in the greater number of the locations where it has been established.

“Nationalism is giving way to independence, formalism to life, traditional errors to a more enlightened knowledge of the Word of God, and to Christian freedom. The pastors have been brought nearer to their people by the bonds of sympathy and daily connexion. They have become real *pastors*, spiritual conductors, who are consulted and appealed to, not only in the hour of death, but in seasons of internal doubts and difficulties, of outward joy, or of trouble and mourning. The *elders* and *deacons* (whose very names were scarcely known a few years since) are of the utmost utility in the Free Church, in assisting, and, when necessary, taking the place of the pastors, when the latter are expelled from their parishes by the public authorities. The congregations feel that the breath of life exists among them; they are no longer silent bodies, listening only, and leaving to other hands the care of their salvation. The members of the Church are making progress in all respects; and in general they feel it to be a privilege to suffer for the name of Christ. There is certainly a bright prospect before the Free Church of the Canton of Vaud, in spite of all the persecutions of its foes.”

Even in Hungary,* a country which Austria is endeavouring to crush by her arms, it appears that the spirit of true piety is reviving. The

* Since the above was written, the Hungarians have been crushed by the united forces of Austria and Russia, and their liberties, for the present, annihilated: but still the spirit of liberty, though apparently subdued, yet breathes its aspirations to Heaven, and will, I humbly trust, sooner

writer, after expatiating upon the means used by the enemies of vital religion to abridge the Protestants of their liberties, says that Satan could not by these means “prevent the return of hope.” And to show the independent spirit by which the clergy are actuated, though poor as respects this world’s goods, he recounts the manner in which they rejected a tempting offer of the Papal government to furnish them with a “public salary.” After discussing the subject in two separate synods, acting independently and without the knowledge of each other, they unanimously, and at length conjointly, resolved to decline the proffered aid, assigning the following as their reasons :—

“CHRIST hath provided for us all that was necessary for our temporal estate, during long centuries of persecution ; He will not now forsake us. As to the government, kindly disposed, no doubt, but nevertheless papist, sooner or later, as a reward for the favour it bestows, it would insinuate itself into the internal government of

or later, receive an answer, and God will proclaim their emancipation. Indeed, the despotism *seems* to be regaining its ascendancy ; yet it is certain that it will not long hold its dominion, but will itself fall under its own weight, when the human mind shall be emancipated from its thralldom, and the principles of civil and religious liberty shall be universally established. Let all the lovers of God fervently pray for this consummation.

our Church. We cannot, like Esau, sell our birthright for a mess of pottage."

What pious heart can avoid honouring, and at the same time deeply sympathizing with, this devout band of Protestants, who, while struggling under the double pressure of poverty and tyranny, nobly disdained to accept the pecuniary assistance offered them, lest it might be a means of their corruption, by giving their enemies a pretence for meddling with the internal affairs of their Church!

In Germany, the signs of the times seem to indicate spiritual prosperity. Had I room I should like to quote the entire speech of Mr. Wichern, in which he urged the necessity of forming a Home Mission, more especially for the benefit of the poor, and particularly the journeymen mechanics: "hundreds of thousands of them," he said, "were compelled to wander about in search of employment," and were thus exposed to all the allurements of vice, and to the corrupting influence of an infidel philosophy with which the country abounds. The following account of a meeting in behalf of the Home Mission will show the spirit by which this veteran of the cross of Christ is animated:—

"In the public meeting, which was soon after held in Hamburg, for the promotion of the Home Mission,

Candidate Wichern bore testimony to the Christian zeal and self-sacrificing devotion with which Miss Sieveking, of that city, had long laboured to promote the spiritual well-being of her towns-people, and the success which had attended her unwearied efforts in the formation of a Female Visiting Society, in establishing schools for the young, and asylums for the old, in which not only their bodily but their soul-necessities met the most evangelical attention. He likewise noticed the fearless and zealous exertions of the Rev. G. Oncken, Baptist minister in Hamburg; and, while avowing his dissent from the reverend gentleman on the subject of infant baptism, he bore glad and just testimony to the truly Gospel preaching and practice of that confessor, and even *martyr*, for the truth as it is in Jesus, in those evil days—now, it is to be hoped, forever past—of Hamburg's persecuting oligarchy.

“He further stated, that a Berlin clergyman having avowed his desire to labour for the Home Mission, but his ignorance of how it might best be accomplished, ‘I told him,’ said Wichern, ‘to follow the example of our English brethren; to place himself at the corner of some street, and preach Christ crucified to all the passers by. But it is not clerical missionaries only, nor even chiefly, that we want,’ continued Mr. Wichern; ‘we want lay preachers, and that of every class. We want, as Lord Ashley most truly said, in respect of London, ‘neither money nor old clothes, but living men, to penetrate to the homes and hearts of the poor.’ The blight of infidelity has fallen on our land chiefly through the instrumentality of an artisan propaganda; it must be met by the counteracting influence of a Christian artisan propaganda. We must have believing schoolmasters, believing handicraftsmen of every grade

and description, who, from love to God and the souls of men, will go among those of their own occupation, and labour to displace the rank and poisonous weeds of false doctrine and licentious practice, by the 'good seed of the word.' If the people will not come to the Gospel, then truly, as Lord Ashley says, 'We must carry the Gospel to the people;' and if we seek to know how England, of all European countries, has escaped revolution, we may see in her Sunday-schools, her city missions, her freely preached and generally received Christianity, the sole, the all-sufficient solution of the problem. Even in our own sphere, experience has taught us in late years a weighty lesson; and the report of our brother, Candidate Gleiss, respecting his attempted city mission during 1847, may well confirm our hopes and stimulate our endeavours. From this report it appears that two hundred and thirty families have been visited, during the past year, in one suburb of Hamburg alone, and that chiefly with the ostensible object of inquiring what children would be disposed to attend Sunday-schools. And although suspicion, and even dislike and repulsion, occasionally met the first approaches of the Christian visitant, yet these were speedily overcome by the conviction which persevering, disinterested kindness never fails to bring home to the most obdurate bosom. The visits of Mr. Gleiss are now looked forward to with eager pleasure by many a household, who at first scowled upon him with a most repelling coldness; and such will be, undoubtedly, the cheering result of a more extended Home Mission. Let us try to show, as well as to feel, love for those who have erred from the right way; and He who loveth mercy better than sacrifice will doubtless bless the attempt.' 'But let it not be supposed,' continued Mr. Wichern, 'that the Christian

missionary duty is all without doors. Every family has a sphere of its own; and by family worship, instruction of children and servants, and the conscientious performance of every relative duty, should contribute its share to 'leavening the whole lump' of society with Christian principle.' The result of this meeting, which was not only numerous, but comprised the *élite* of Hamburg's population, was the formation of a society pledged to the promotion of the Home Mission by every practicable means.

"One lady undertook the personal instruction of twelve destitute children. Others joined themselves to Sunday-schools already formed, or avowed a readiness to assist in forming new ones. Subsequent meetings have been occupied in suggesting and maturing various schemes of city missionary labour; and the spirit of Christian charity, thus powerfully aroused, and supported by the daily accumulating proofs of pressing necessity, will doubtless, within a brief space of time, assume a form and substance, before whose illuminating and warming influence the spirit of darkness will retreat abashed."

These extracts prove most incontestably that the spirit of evangelical religion is reviving in the hearts, and exemplifying itself in the practice, of God's ministers and people in those countries. Recently, also, Dr. Baird informs us that a Bible Society, auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, has been formed in one of the chief cities in Italy, and that English, Americans, Swiss, French, and Italians took part in

its organization. "This," he says, "is the first Bible Society, as far as our knowledge extends, that has ever been formed in Italy proper." We most heartily join in the prayer of Dr. Baird, that this organization may be succeeded by that of hundreds of others, before very many years shall have passed away."

In a subsequent number of the same work, namely, for May, 1849, I find an account of a meeting of Evangelical Clergymen in Wittenberg, the very place where Luther published, Oct. 21, 1517, the ninety-five theses, so celebrated as the beginning of the Reformation, to concert measures for the spread of pure religion throughout Germany. Many great and good men were there. The conference lasted three days. Dr. Baird says:—

"Its object was emphatically the promotion of *Christian Union*. There were present men from the four principal Protestant communions of Germany,—the *Lutherans*, the *Reformed*, the *Evangelical Church*, (a body much larger than all the others, and composed of those Lutheran and Reformed Churches which coalesced in the reign of the late King of Prussia,) and the *Moravians*.

"After a free interchange of opinion, and no little discussion, an Evangelical Alliance was formed, to be composed of all those who shall declare their faith to be in accordance with the Confessions of their respective Churches or Communions, and shall engage that their acts in the Alliance assemblies shall be in conformity

with these confessions. Such, in substance, is the basis upon which this movement rests; and it would be difficult to form one which would be either more simple or more appropriate."

The principal objects of this Evangelical Alliance were set forth to be :—

"1. To show the fundamental unity of the Protestant Churches.

"2. To bear a common testimony against the various adversaries of the truth.

"3. To give mutual aid and advice.

"4. To mediate in case of difficulties which may arise between Churches that are members of the Alliance.

"5. To maintain and defend the rights of the Protestant Evangelical Churches, secured to them by the Empire, or by the several governments of Germany.

"6. To give aid and advice to isolated Evangelical Churches, both in and out of Germany.

"7. To promote and maintain union with all the Evangelical Churches of Europe and the world.

"8. To prosecute works of charity, and especially that of Home Missions, for the evangelization of the nominally Christian world."

The following reflections, by Dr. Baird, fully accord with my own views and feelings :—

"Such are the great objects of this noble movement; and it must be confessed that they are of the greatest importance. How cheering it is to see such a movement at this time, commencing in the very heart of Germany! Blessed be God, a brighter day is about to dawn upon the world! Who can estimate the good

which will follow from such an effort to bring together the various evangelical branches of the Protestant Church in Germany, at a time when God is breaking down all the barriers which have for almost three centuries prevented the spread of the truth into the Papal portions of it? The new constitution of the German Empire throws open all parts of that empire to the Gospel, by establishing religious liberty. And, what is still more wonderful, the new constitution of the Austrian Empire throws open all the portions of that empire to all judicious efforts of the friends of the truth. How wonderful this day! And how appropriate to the times is this blessed movement of the evangelical Christians of Germany to form a Christian union, and unite their efforts to promote the regeneration of nominally Christian lands, and especially their own great country! May God crown their exertions with abundant success! We feel confident that he will. Already we learn that the conference at Wittenberg has produced good fruits. In view of the deplorable spiritual state of Germany, the conference recommended days of fasting and humiliation, which have been observed by many churches with happy results. The 'Call to Repentance,' a short but admirable tract, addressed to all German brethren of the evangelical communions, which the conference, before its dissolution, resolved to publish, is obtaining a wide circulation, and is doing great good."

Now do not these facts, together with the cursory view heretofore taken of the general state of the world, present a most encouraging prospect to the Church of Jesus Christ, and visibly foreshadow the coming of the Lord of

Hosts, to scatter his enemies, unbelief and sin, and to gather his elect from the four quarters of the earth into one fold, and to appoint over it one Shepherd, even Him whose “going forth is from of old, from everlasting?” These scattered groups of pious Christians, breathing forth their aspirations to Almighty God that His kingdom may come, are not unlike to a train of powder that has been laid for the purpose of blowing up the citadel of a besieged fortress, when no sooner is the match applied than the magazine takes fire, and the citadel is scattered to the four winds of heaven! These bands of holy souls, scattered throughout Europe, Asia, some parts of Africa, in America, and in the islands of the seas, uniting their prayers together before the throne of God—crying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”—shall sooner or later receive an answer to their prayers, and God will send the fire of His Holy Spirit, and suddenly a blaze of pure love shall burst out in every direction, which will burn up the “hay, wood, and stubble,” and God will take to himself the kingdom, and reign universal King forever and ever.

In the next chapter I shall, by the permission of a gracious God, attempt to show what is to be

done for the accomplishment of this grand event. And I beseech that no one will pronounce me a wild enthusiast till he hears all I have to say on this subject. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

CHAPTER XXIV.

We live in an eventful era—The author confines his address to his own Church—Increase of means augments responsibility—Wealth a blessing if used right—No sin in gold and silver, but in their abuse—The blessings of life should create gratitude—The manner in which wealth becomes a snare—How it may be made a blessing—Increase of wealth devolves high responsibility—Surplus wealth enough to liquidate the debts of churches—Covetousness must be eradicated.

THAT the "signs of the times" call aloud for renewed exertions among all Christians, appears indisputable. But I have no right to speak to any except to those of my own denomination, and therefore shall not assume the task of admonishing, reproving, or exhorting any but those of our own communion, in regard to duty—a duty indeed of high import—of tremendous responsibility—a duty originating from the relation we sustain to God, to the world around us, to each other, as fellow-Christians who have a common interest at stake, and who are therefore called upon to labour with all fidelity to

advance this interest by every lawful means within our power.

In the view we have taken of the present state of the Church, compared with what it was formerly, we have seen the vast improvements which have been made in temporal, intellectual, and spiritual enjoyments—how God has mercifully enlarged our borders, increased our substance, and in a variety of ways multiplied our resources and capabilities of doing good. These certainly have proportionately augmented the amount of our responsibility, imposed upon us new and higher duties, and that in exact proportion as we have increased in wealth, in knowledge, and spiritual attainments.

All these, I grant, are but means, or a power put into our hands for good or evil. Wealth, intellectual endowments, literary advantages and acquirements, religious privileges, and even the enjoyment of religion itself, in its deepest and most holy form, are all but so many talents, with which the God of providence and grace has intrusted us, and has commanded us to “occupy,” or faithfully to improve them, until He shall come to call us to an account. But while it is freely admitted that all these are but means to be conscientiously used for the attainment of an ultimate end, it must, I think, be also ad-

mitted that they are advantages of a highly beneficial character—of such a character as should, and will, excite the gratitude of every enlightened understanding, and of every pious heart.

Solomon says, “Money answers all things;” but he also says, “If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them.” While it must be acknowledged that without money, that is, wealth, in a greater or lesser degree, no extensive good can be achieved, no churches built, no colleges erected and endowed, no professors supported, and of course no students educated, no missions established and sustained, no Bibles printed and circulated, nor any other good books issued and read, no Sabbath-schools conducted, and finally no ministers supported—I say, that while it is self-evident that all these things involve the necessity of wealth, they equally demonstrate that a spirit of liberality must accompany its possession, and characterize its possessor, in order to avoid that inordinate love of riches indicated by the wise man when he exhorted his readers not to *set their heart* upon them. There is no sin in riches, any more than there is virtue in poverty. The poor man may be as vicious in his poverty, and manifest all the malignity of an unsanctified heart, by indulging an envious disposition toward his richer neighbour, and

evinced all the idolatry which the apostle denominated covetousness to be, just as effectually as the rich man may exhibit the malevolence of his unholy nature by that proud disdainfulness with which he looks down upon the poor man, neglecting and despising him on account of his poverty, and by refusing to give of his abundance to “make the heart of the widow and fatherless to rejoice” at the reception of his bounty.

I said that there is no sin in riches. The sin consists in so setting our hearts upon them as to make them our god, or our chief good—in laying them up as our treasures—in using them, or rather in abusing them, as instruments for selfish, luxurious, and sensual purposes. Surely there is no sin in gold or silver, nor in any of the productions of the earth or seas; God indeed has given us all these things for our comfort, and we are allowed to “use them as not abusing them.” He has not only made the earth prolific for the support of man and beast, but He has beautified the heavens over our head, studded the canopy with the moon and innumerable stars to guide the traveller by night, as well as for other grand and beneficent purposes, and caused the sun to shine by day, not only to exhibit his own ineffable majesty, but also for the benefit of his intelligent and unintelligent creatures.

These things considered, I do not like to hear a Christian man speak contemptuously of the world, understanding that term as including whatever God has made, and as excluding whatever is sinful in the world. If, when we say we despise the world, we mean the sinful world, let us say so, and thus spare that beautiful world which God has made for our habitation, and so richly furnished with everything needful for life and comfort. I never yet knew a man or woman, however devout and holy, but what would eat his or her meal of victuals, when hungry, with as exquisite a zest, and drink water, when thirsty, with as keen a relish, and enjoy as much the luxury of a warm and comfortable room in cold weather, as any other person ; and they would be fools if they did not, for our heavenly Father has wisely and benevolently furnished us with all these things for our benefit. And he that can look abroad upon the earth, and view its variegated productions, and lift his eye to the heavens and behold the sun, moon, and stars, without feeling his heart kindled by the fires of devotion, and his soul drawn out in streams of gratitude to the great Architect of heaven and earth, I envy not his enjoyment.

Forgive this seeming digression from the main subject under consideration, for I could hardly

avoid this short tribute of praise to God for thus fitting up this beautiful world for the residence of man, and for thus opening so many sources of enjoyment—enjoyment not unworthy of the most holy, sanctified Christian.

I was about to say, that if God has said, “The hand of the diligent maketh rich,” he has said, with equally emphatic language, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.” The sin, therefore, of the rich man does not consist in the simple fact of his having an abundance of wealth, but in his laying it up for *himself*, instead of employing it for the glory of God, by dispersing it abroad, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, supporting missions, and in all other works of benevolence and charity.

Here then lies the sin of wealth. It consists in hoarding it up, or in spending it in extravagant living, in sumptuous furniture, in loading our tables with needless luxuries, in adorning our persons with superfluous ornaments, and in making it an excuse for “needless self-indulgence,” for living in idleness and dissipation. In this way wealth becomes a snare, and naturally tends to inflate the heart with pride, and to puff up the mind with the wind of vanity. And hence there is, I fully believe, no other effectual way to prevent these sad effects but for the rich man

to get and to keep his heart right toward God, to obtain the sanctification of his affections, and then he will consecrate his all, his wealth and influence, to the cause of God. He that does this, the more wealth he possesses, the more useful he becomes. The more influence he wields in consequence of his wealth—for, in spite of philosophy, a good man will be honoured in proportion to his riches—the wider will be the circle of that influence, the more will he draw in his wake, and the more vast will be his reward; for if he that giveth only “a cup of cold water to any, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward,” how great shall be the reward of that holy rich man who consecrates all that he can spare from his own immediate wants and the wants of his family, and after reserving a sufficient capital to carry on his business, to the cause of God, to the demands of humanity!

I have made these remarks to show the great advantages we possess in consequence of our increase of wealth, and likewise to exhibit the higher responsibility God has devolved upon us to be proportionably useful in our day and generation. “Where much is given much is required.” And I verily believe that God has prospered the work of our hands, and, as the fruit of honest industry and prudent economy,

has increased our temporal prosperity, with the express design of enabling us to enlarge the sphere of our usefulness, that we may proportionably extend our circle of doing good to the souls and bodies of our fellow-men. All these temporal goods are the gifts of his beneficence, bestowed upon us that we may more perfectly fulfil the end of our existence. Those among us, therefore, who possess wealth, hoard it up, become proud and vain, evince that spirit of covetousness which the apostle ranks among idolatries, that seek their own ease and self-aggrandizement, indulge in a luxurious mode of living, instead of exerting themselves to extend the cause of Christ in the various ways now presented to us—those who *thus* devote the wealth with which God has intrusted them, will inherit the curse instead of the “blessing of him that is ready to perish.” O how much good might the wealthy Methodists do, were they to consecrate their surplus money to the cause of humanity!

If the surplus wealth possessed by the Methodists in the city of New-York—and I speak of them merely because I know them better here than elsewhere—was devoted to the cause of God as it should be, they would very soon liquidate the debts of their churches, and have capital enough left to carry on their business, and with

the ordinary blessing of God on the labour of their hands, they would still be able to meet current expenses, and have withal to contribute their proportion to send the Gospel to more destitute parts of our country, and to foreign lands ; as well as to aid in the cause of education, &c. And the same may be said, I doubt not, with equal truth, in behalf of the Methodists very generally, both in the cities and country villages. The defect is not in the lack of ability, nor, in general, of a disposition, but the absence of a suitable stimulant, and a well-devised system of finance, that should bear as equally as may be on all concerned.

That spirit of penuriousness which distinguishes some of our more wealthy brethren, both in the cities and country places, but more particularly in the latter, must be put down, conquered, and rooted out, or it “will eat as doth a canker,” and finally destroy all the good they may possess. The temporal blessings which they possess—and they possess them chiefly in consequence of their becoming Methodists—must be consecrated to God, if they would secure the continuance of the “good-will of Him who dwelt in the bush.”

CHAPTER XXV.

Sanctification and benevolence go together—Those in middling circumstances most liberal—If all were so, there would be no lack—This not done—Why not—Importance of the subject—Methodists generally thriving—Covetousness not confined to the rich—To ascertain whether all give according to their ability, the missionary cause examined—Great deficiency—The same supposed in other departments—The duty of liberality pressed upon all preachers and people.

IN the former chapter we have seen how the Methodists have increased in their means of doing good by an augmentation of their wealth, and hence the high responsibility which rests upon them of extending the circle of their influence in exact proportion to their means. This they unquestionably will do, provided the work of sanctification be simultaneously carried on in their souls with the increase of riches, for this holy work always begets in the heart a spirit of liberality which flows out in acts, not only of justice—for a sanctified soul certainly exhibits this stern attribute of the divine nature in all its purity—but also in deeds of charity, displaying, on all fitting occasions, an expanded spirit of benevolence.

Now I know full well that there are many members of our Church, both among the rich and poor—and by the poor I mean those who

live by hard labour, and who nevertheless are not able to lay up much, if anything, for a future day—who have been, and are, distinguished for their liberality. These are they who are ever ready to contribute of their substance to build churches, found colleges, support missions, and feed the poor, &c., according to their ability ; yea, they are glad of an opportunity to do this, knowing that they are but stewards for God, and that as such they are “required to be faithful.” If therefore they “let out the Lord’s money,” and they receive the stated increase, it is that they may expend it the more liberally in advancing the cause of Christianity ; and thus become “rich in good works, and are laying a good foundation against the time to come.” Such are an honour to the Church of Christ, a blessing to the world, and the blessing of God shall accompany them through life, and he will reward them a hundred-fold, and in the time to come they shall have everlasting life. And if all were equally liberal, if all would contribute according to their ability, there would be no lack in any department of our work, none would suffer in penury, no means would be wanting to send as many men to preach the Gospel as God should raise up and qualify for that purpose ; churches, colleges, and academies would be

built, and every minister, whether efficient in the field of labour, or superannuated, would be comfortably supported.

But as this is not done, there must be some deficiency somewhere, among some class or classes of our people. I think it highly probable that the fault is more among the richer class than among those in middling circumstances. These latter, I am inclined to believe, contribute much more than the former, in proportion to their ability, for the support of the general cause. There are those among us whose wealth would justify them in giving \$20,000 to found a professorship in a college, and then, after reserving a sufficient capital to carry on their business, have enough left to support their families, and to contribute their full quota for the ordinary calls of the Church, who think it a great stretch of liberality to give \$100 or \$200, or perhaps \$500, toward such an object. Let such remember that God requires of them a due proportion of what he has bestowed upon them; and that he that layeth up treasure for *himself*, and is not "rich in faith," cannot be an heir of the grace of life. How admonitory is the language of the Saviour, "How hardly shall they that are rich enter the kingdom of heaven."

I have dwelt the longer upon this branch of

the subject, because I consider it of vast importance. Wealth has naturally a corrupting influence. And I verily believe that at this moment the Methodists are in greater danger of being corrupted by riches, than they are of suffering from poverty. Though there may be, and doubtless are, those among us that are extremely poor, and may therefore suffer somewhat for the lack of the comforts of life, yet such are comparatively few—the most are in thriving circumstances, others are abounding in wealth; and while some of the latter exhibit in their conduct all the liberality of noble-hearted, genuine, holy Christians, it is to be feared that others manifest that love of the world which is incompatible with that enlarged love to God which characterizes the sanctified heart. Let such be admonished by the words of the apostle, “They that will be rich”—that *will* be rich, in spite of every demand of justice, truth, and honesty, of mercy and benevolence, that make all their plans bend to the attainment of this one object, at the expense of everything else—they that will be *thus* rich, “fall into divers temptations, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” If, instead of acquiring riches in the exceptionable way above indicated, wealth flows

in upon a man as the fruit of honest industry and prudent economy, and he expends it to the glory of God, by contributing to build up the Redeemer's cause among men, why then the more he gets the more blessed is he, and "look, what he hath laid out shall be paid him again." Not so with the miser, who makes gold his god, who is "greedy of filthy lucre," and who hoards up his wealth as the most precious treasure of his heart.

But this spirit of covetousness does not belong exclusively to the rich. There may be those among the poorer class who evince all the spirit of avarice; who hug their pennies as closely, and who are as restless under their comparative poverty, as they would if they were worth their tens of thousands. Such manifest as much inordinate attachment to the world by their envious disposition, by living beyond their income, by aping the manners of the rich, and by refusing to give according to their ability, as the rich miser does by hoarding up his wealth. And I have frequently known the comparatively poor man disgrace himself by making a poor mouth, in order to excite the compassion of his more wealthy brethren, that he might filch from them something to supply his assumed wants. However disgusting this practice is to the modest,

upright mind, it is exemplified, more or less, in every-day life, and it demonstrates that covetousness is not confined to any one class, but is an inherent propensity of the human heart, and shows itself as effectually under a plain garb and a modest exterior as it does under the foppery of fashion and the lordly deportment of the haughty aristocrat. Grace—the grace of God alone, in Christ Jesus, operating upon the heart, producing a radical change within, and hallowing all the affections—can root out this covetous disposition, and make “the churl a liberal man.”

Now to ascertain whether the Methodists, as a body, do their duty in contributing according to their ability, I will examine one department of benevolence in which they are engaged, and are pledged to sustain—I mean the *missionary department*—and I select this because it affords, from its annual exhibit of income and expenditure, a more sure datum to found a calculation upon than any other. From the minutes of 1848 I find the numbers in the Methodist Episcopal Church to be 608,978—I will say, for the sake of avoiding fractions, 700,000—and from the annual report of the Missionary Society for 1848, there were collected \$78,646 84, and for the purpose of avoiding fractions, we will put it at

\$80,000. Now divide 700,000 by 80,000, it will give not quite nine cents each. This certainly is a very small amount—an average of about nine cents, for each member to contribute. And if we recollect that some pay five, ten, twenty, fifty, and even one hundred dollars a year, it will appear that there are many who contribute nothing at all. Who will say, from these facts, that the Methodist people give according to their ability to sustain the missionary cause?

Though, therefore, there is an encouraging improvement in this department of benevolence, in comparison to what was done twenty or thirty years since, yet it is very manifest that there is room for a much further improvement. Were a regular system of finance carried into execution, universally—such a system as should call forth the liberality of all, according to each one's ability—I see not why \$350,000 might not be realized just as easily as the \$80,000 has been—for this would be only fifty cents each.

Nor do I suppose that a much better result would appear from an examination of other departments of benevolence, such as erecting colleges, and the supporting supernumerary and superannuated preachers, their widows and orphans. I find from the amounts collected and

paid over to these last-named claimants upon the justice and charity of the Church, that from twenty to fifty per centum is all that these most worthy objects of our affection and veneration receive yearly, including the income of the Book-Concern and the Chartered Fund. This deficiency arises, in my opinion, more from the want of a simultaneous and systematic effort among preachers and people to meet the demand, than it does from the lack of either an ability or disposition to supply the requisite means.

Now what I wish to press upon all concerned, both preachers and people—for there are some preachers as able to give as any others, and a few, I fear, who evince as strong an attachment to “filthy lucre” as do the most penurious among the private members—is the urgent necessity, to prevent their riches from “eating as doth a canker,” of their giving a due proportion of their goods, and that statedly, and according to “weight and measure,” for the support of the cause of God, in the various departments already indicated. Instead of “laying up treasure for *themselves*,” or hoarding it up for their posterity,—and they know not who shall come after them, whether “wise men or fools,”—let them so dispose of it as to “lay up a good foun-

dation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” “To the pure all things are pure.” And those who have purified their souls from “all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,” have likewise consecrated their all upon the altar of God—have devoted to his service their time, their talent, their substance, and they dare no more use their money for sensual gratification, merely to adorn their persons, to pamper their appetites, or let it lie idle, merely for the benefit of their posterity, than they can employ their tongues to deceive, to blaspheme the name of God, or to defraud their neighbour in a bargain. The one is as strictly prohibited as the other, and therefore is as incompatible with holiness of heart as any other vicious practice.

I greatly fear this subject is not generally duly considered. Money, or wealth, is as much a talent with which we are intrusted, and for the use of which, therefore, we must give an account, as intellect, as time, or the various opportunities of doing good are. And a minister of splendid endowments, and shining acquirements, is no more accountable to God for the manner in which he improves his advantages, than the rich man is for the manner in which he employs his wealth. And if a minister should be so fortunate as to possess, in addition to his

mental endowments and acquirements, wealth, and should exemplify the avarice of the miser, the littleness of the niggard, and screw, and twist, and oppress the poor, in order to increase his riches, and otherwise demean himself in his neighbourhood, so as to acquire the character of a covetous man, he will not only disgrace his high and holy profession, but also render himself odious in the estimation of every liberal-hearted Christian, and be a stumbling-block, over which sinners will stumble into hell ! What an awful consideration is this ! Let those who are guilty think of it in time to repent, “lest, after they have preached to others, they themselves should become castaways.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

Holiness essential to vigorous action—The Church acts through her ministers—Curse of mere formal ministers—Learning sanctified by grace—Advantages of the present over former ministers—This increases responsibility—Eminent talents compatible with deep piety—Examples of this—Does not exclude others—The whole pressed upon the reader.

IN an effort to ascertain the responsibility of the Church, we have been led to estimate the more ample means she possesses now than formerly, in consequence of an increase of wealth. This enables her to enlarge the sphere of her useful-

ness by multiplying her books, building churches, erecting colleges, sending out and sustaining missionaries. But, after all, these are but subsidiary means, mere outward appliances, all of which may be used for good or evil, and that in exact proportion to the motive with which they are used, or the holiness or unholiness of the internal principle which gives life and animation to the external machinery. And this motive will be good in the same proportion that the heart is made pure by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit applying the merits of Jesus Christ; and this principle of action will be strong and vigorous in the exact proportion with which it is fed and strengthened with the "bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;" for nothing, indeed, hath such a tendency to enlighten the understanding, to invigorate the heart, to set and keep all the intellectual powers in motion, as well as to give them a right direction, as this continual influx of the Holy Spirit, this nourishing the soul with divine food. When the heart of the Church is thus pure, freed from those gross passions which defile the soul—when pride, anger, unholy desire, the inordinate love of the world, and the supreme love of self are expelled from the heart, and meekness, long-

suffering, a pure desire to glorify God, and a supreme love to Him, are implanted within—then the Church is prepared to act vigorously, and will put forth all her energies to advance the cause of man's salvation.

But the Church acts through her representatives. It has always been according to the order of God to save the world by means of a *living* ministry. I say a *living* ministry—and I desire these words to be understood most emphatically.

The greatest curse which ever came upon the Church, and, of course, upon the world, has been the imposition of a dead, formal, lifeless ministry upon the Church. While the holy fire which burned in the hearts of the apostles and primitive evangelists continued its heat in the hearts of their successors, its radiating rays fell upon all who came within its influence, melting their hearts, and moulding them into the image of Jesus Christ. Like electricity, which needs but the power of friction to call it into action, so this heavenly fire, by the constant action and re-action between the ministry and the people, reciprocally affected each other, and by their simultaneous exertions they were instrumental in diffusing the pure flame of divine love all around them. But that this fire may

continue to burn, it must be unceasingly fed from the altar of God. "Without me ye can do nothing," says Christ. And though this is true in respect to all Christians, it is more especially true in regard to all his ministers. The weapons of their warfare are only "mighty through God." It is therefore by constant communion with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that the minister of the sanctuary is fully qualified to the successful discharge of his high and holy functions.

Whatever may be his natural or acquired abilities—however learned, or trained in the school of theology—and how many soever his advantages from position or profession—unless he is anointed with the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, and unless he daily and momentarily lives under the influence of this same Holy Spirit, however canonically he may be set apart for the ministry, however orthodox may be his creed, systematic and able his sermons, and even outwardly irreproachable his conduct, he is but "dead while he liveth"—he belongs not to the *living* ministry.

Now that the present Methodist ministry possess many advantages which the earlier ministers did not, is fully evident. They have the advantage of an education, even allowing that

they have not had a collegiate course of mental training, which most of their predecessors did not possess. It is well known that most of the early Methodist preachers were taken from the common walks of life; and in those days even common schools were scarce, and those that existed were taught by masters and mistresses who now would be deemed unfit to teach the merest rudiments of an English education. From this class of the population the first Methodist preachers were principally taken. Books also were exceedingly scarce and expensive. The chief books were a pocket Bible, Hymn-Book, and Discipline, and if at any time they lit upon a commentary, Wesley's or Burkett's Notes on the New Testament, or perhaps occasionally Henry's Commentary, it was considered a great treat. But they were men of God, they lived and moved in Him, and furnished irrefutable evidence that they were called and sent by God, by the reforming effects of their labours.

How is it now? In addition to the advantages of a common-school education, now offered to all the children of our country, many of our ministers have had the opportunity of a classical education; books of all sorts, historical, philosophical, theological, whether in commentaries on

the Holy Scriptures or otherwise, are put into their hands. If any, therefore, remain ignorant, it is either because he is too stupid to learn, or too indolent to study ; and permit me to say that either of these defects unfits a man for a minister of the Gospel. I cannot, indeed, believe that God calls a man to be a minister in holy things, who is either destitute of holiness himself, or is too ignorant to instruct others in the things of the kingdom. We have, however, I presume to think, but very few such ministerial drones in the Church.

Well, now, does not our responsibility increase in exact proportion to these literary and scientific advantages ? Are not these additional talents with which God has intrusted us, and for the use of which we must give an account ?

To say that eminent talents, high literary and scientific acquirements, are incompatible with an elevated state of holiness and of extensive usefulness, is to contradict the facts of all history. To go no farther than our own denomination for a proof of this, what do we find there ? Were not the Wesleys endowed with talents of the first order, and adorned with the highest literary and scientific attainments ? And was not Fletcher, the holy and indefatigable Fletcher, equally eminent for gifts and acquirements ? And what shall

we say of Benson, Clarke, and Watson? Were they behind any of their contemporaries for either natural or acquired abilities?

And what shall be said of some in our own country? Of the living I may not speak, for I doubt the propriety of writing the biography of men while they live, or of praising them to their face. But of the honoured dead we may speak without reserve. What, then, shall be said of Asbury, whose praise is in all the churches? Though not classically educated, yet we know that he was a close student, that he acquired a knowledge of the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written, and that he possessed an expanded intellect, and a highly improved understanding. Of Emory, whose acuteness of mind, and comprehensive judgment, evinced the powers of a great man, and whose mind had been highly improved by literary and scientific culture? And what shall be said of Fisk? He was both classically educated and highly adorned with scientific acquirements, and all these were ingrafted upon a mind richly endowed with every natural gift.

Were not all these men "bright and shining lights" in their day and generation? Did they not go in and out before the churches, exerting a hallowing influence all around them? They were, in fact, so many "golden candlesticks,"

emitting a pure flame wherever they moved, being lit up by the Spirit of the Almighty. They were, indeed, the “anointed ones that stood by the Lord of the whole earth,” into whose hearts the “golden oil” was poured continually, by which their souls were fed and strengthened, and their tongues became eloquent in the cause of God.

To say, therefore, that strong mental powers, and high literary and scientific attainments, are incompatible with deep and ardent piety, with a flaming and untiring zeal in the work of man’s salvation, and with extended usefulness in the cause of God, is to condemn the founders of our own Church, to question the piety of some of the brightest ornaments of human nature, and to pour contempt upon some of the purest spirits with which any denomination has ever been blessed. It not only falsifies the facts of all history, but it goes to impugn the wisdom and goodness of Almighty God, who called such men as Moses, who was skilled in all the learning of Egypt, as Paul the Apostle, as Luther and Melancthon, as Wesley and Fletcher, as Clarke, Asbury, and Fisk, and a host of others that might be named, all of whom may be ranked among the giants of the Church, not only in the depth of their piety, and the activity of their zeal, but also in

the greatness of their intellects, and their high literary and scientific acquirements.

I do not say, indeed, that such men are the only ones whom God calls into his vineyard. We know that the fishermen and tax-gatherers of Galilee were among the first of the apostles of the Lord Jesus, and that in every age he has magnified his grace in calling and sending forth men of small literary attainments, and not of very expanded intellects, that he might "confound the wisdom of the wise," and save the world by the "foolishness of preaching."* But while it is allowed that he has done, and still does, this, it is contended, with equal earnestness, that he shows his sovereignty no less conspicuously in selecting instruments of a more polished character to accomplish his purposes of mercy to the fallen sons and daughters of men; and that, in the same proportion that these advantages are augmented among us, our obligation for their right improvement becomes stronger and stronger.

*It ought, perhaps, to be remarked, that the apostle, in the above words, does not admit that he himself, and others engaged in the same work, were weak, foolish preachers. But allowing what their enemies alleged against them to be true, namely, that the preaching of Christ crucified was, as the Greek philosophers alleged it to be, foolishness, yet God had so put his seal upon it as to make it "the power of God,

This is the point I wish to press upon myself and all my readers. Like the central fires in the bowels of the earth, the intensity of whose heat is in proportion to their depth, so does the fire which burns in the heart of a holy, devoted minister increase in its intensity in exact proportion to its "length, and breadth, and height;" and, like the former, which occasionally burst from their confinement, and pour forth their volumes of flame in an impetuous torrent, the anointed minister of Jesus Christ, feeling his heart agitated with the fire of Divine love, pours it forth in streams of burning eloquence, carrying away with him, by the impetuosity of his zeal and the force of his arguments, the understandings and consciences of his audience.

Let all such ministers, those whose hearts are and the wisdom of God"—that is, the powerful instrument of man's salvation. So conspicuously did the wisdom and power of God shine forth in this scheme of salvation, wrought out by Christ Jesus, as to confound all the wisdom of the Greek philosophers, and so aptly was it applied to the consciences of those who heard it proclaimed, that they felt its powerful influence to the salvation of the soul. In this sense it was termed the "foolishness of preaching." But let it be remembered that a fool can never exhibit *this* foolishness of preaching, for he will but preach folly, inasmuch as a stream can never rise higher than its fountain—though it be true that an illiterate man, possessed of strong common sense, filled with the Divine Spirit, may still preach the Gospel in the "power and demonstration of the Spirit."

penetrated with a consciousness of the worth of immortal souls, who sigh for the abominations of the land, and who, of course, glory in naught but the cross of the Lord Jesus, look up and abroad, and while viewing the vast fields that are already "white for the harvest," "cry aloud, and spare not," but point continually to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Such will not sit down, and supinely say,

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise,—
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies;"

but, feeling the love of Christ constraining him, he cries out from the depths of his soul,

"The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering sons of men,
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave.

"My life, my blood, I here present,
If for thy truth they may be spent:
Fulfil thy sovereign counsel, Lord,
Thy will be done, thy name adored."

The first is expressive of a heart languishing under a consciousness of lukewarmness utterly unbecoming an ambassador of the King of kings; while the latter stanzas are expressions of a heart heaving under a pressure of responsibility to God and the world, and declaring its willingness to spend and be spent in the tremendous work

of man's salvation. Hence he exclaims with holy fervour, mixed with strong, steadfast faith,

“Still will I strive, and labour still,
With humble zeal to do thy will,
And trust in thy defence;
My soul into thy hands I give,
And, if he can obtain thy leave,
Let Satan pluck me thence.”*

* This verse, which is among the most sublime, poetical, deeply spiritual, and expressive of the strongest and most scriptural faith in God, of any in the entire collection of hymns, has been left out in the last edition of the Hymn-Book. I know not a single stanza in all the hymns in the old book which could not have been spared better than this. While I live I shall continue its use, for “we two are so joined” that naught but “death can us part.”

The Committee of Revision, I am sure, will allow me this favour, out of respect to the prejudice, if they please so to call it, of old age, rendered, in this instance, more inveterate from long association, and the delights arising from habits of thought, and a similarity of feeling—allow me to say, without being accused of vain boasting—with the immortal bard of Methodism. Had the Committee retained this inimitably sublime and poetical stanza, I could the more easily have forgiven them for laying so many others of my favourites under their ban, and devoting them to the excision of their critical scissors. I console myself, however, with the reflection that the hymns thus condemned are still in being, and may be resorted to as we occasionally resort to the graves of our departed friends, that we may remind ourselves of their past services and virtues. At any rate, this verse shall live in my heart and affections, as a memento of my veneration for its merits. The reader will please examine Matt. x, 27–29 and Rom. viii, 33–39, for a reason for my wishing to retain that stanza in the Hymn-Book.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Erroneous method of converting sinners, particularly the Roman Catholics—True method—Our example must be good—Love and meekness must be exhibited—Contrast between Popery and Protestantism—Religion of love must be propagated by love—Erroneous method pursued towards Roman Catholics—The parties in our country—Real Christians—Nominal Christians—Semi-infidels and bare-faced infidels—The latter no indifferent spectators—Watching for faults among Christians—True method to be pursued—Combinations to put down any sect wrong—Not apostolic—Nor sanctioned by either Luther or Wesley—Successful method—It must be pursued in love—After the example of our Saviour—Such will succeed.

ONE of the most pernicious practical errors into which professed Christians have been betrayed, is the efforts to convert others to their faith by unscriptural means. Though the maxim, “that we may do evil that good may come,” is generally discarded in theory, yet it has been too often exemplified in practice. Hence “Jesuitical cunning” has passed into a proverb, from the “cunning craftiness” resorted to by the followers of Ignatius Loyola, in order to accomplish their object. And this same exceptionable conduct has been exemplified in one way or another by some professed Christians in every age of the Church. Hence the false miracles, the many “lying wonders” which have been

invented by designing men, and palmed upon the people, in order to excite their admiration, and inveigle them into a belief in the infallibility of the Church.

Would that this censurable conduct were confined to only one denomination of Christians. As if to retaliate upon them with similar arts of deception, some Protestants have attempted to oppose the Roman Catholics with weapons, if not of the same sort, yet equally unworthy of the cause they have espoused. It has, indeed, appeared to me that a greater desire has been manifested to render the Roman Catholics odious than simply to do them good. Hence the efforts to make them appear ridiculous, by caricaturing their doctrines and usages, by inventing and propagating falsehoods, such as those contained in Maria Monk's book, as base an imposition as was ever played off upon a credulous multitude, all of which has only tended to injure the cause of Protestantism, and to strengthen the hands of the Roman Catholics. In none of the controversies that I have seen—and I believe I have read the most that has been written upon this subject, besides attending several lectures which have been delivered in opposition to Roman Catholicism—has the spirit of candour been exemplified, much less that

spirit of love which ought to characterize polemical writings of this sort. These writings and lectures were calculated more to irritate the passions, and stir up a spirit of hatred toward the persons censured, than they were to excite that tender sympathy which ought to be inspired in the heart toward the erring sons of men. To do good to the Roman Catholics, they must be treated precisely in the same spirit that we treat all others in similar circumstances.

In the first place, if we would win them over to our faith, we must exhibit before them a superior example of piety, that thus the claims of pure Christianity may be pressed upon them from its living practical effects upon our hearts and lives. Nor are any other weapons than truth and love, plainly and powerfully addressed to their understandings and consciences, to be used for their conversion. We may indeed detect and expose their errors, and denounce their sins, but it should be done in that spirit of meekness and love which will convince them that we seek their salvation, and not their destruction. What would be gained by merely the overthrow of Popery, unless we substitute in its place not merely Protestantism as a system of doctrine and church government, however preferable this may be to that system, but

more especially a living temple, composed of holy souls—souls that shall exhibit in their tempers and conduct the purity and excellence of Christianity. An unconverted, unsanctified Protestant is no better in the sight of God than an unconverted, unsanctified Roman Catholic. They are both under the curse of God's law, and of course are alike exposed to the malediction of Heaven. While in this impenitent state, the one is as much included under sin as the other, and therefore both equally exposed to future wrath, and equally need a change of heart, and an application of the blood of Christ to wash away their sins, and the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit to fit them for an acceptable service here, and for the enjoyment of God hereafter.

There is undoubtedly a difference in the two systems. While Popery is encumbered with numerous unscriptural ceremonies and burdensome requisitions, which clog its wheels, and greatly obscure the peculiar glories of Christianity, Protestantism presents the truth freed from these encumbrances, and unobstructed from these ceremonious observances, which hide the truth, and prevent its beams from shining forth luminously upon the human mind. So far the contrast holds good, and so far Protest-

antism presents its superior claims to the belief and homage of every rational, intelligent mind, and hence proves itself much more likely to be an instrument in the hand of God for the conversion of the world than Roman Catholicism does. Yet if I, as a Protestant, manifest all the pride and pomposity of an unhumiliated Pharisee in my intercourse with Papists, I can present no evidence that I am any more a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus than they are, and therefore can lay no superior claim to the character of a genuine Christian, to induce them to change their religion for mine. The fact is, we are all, in our unconverted state, alike an abhorrence in the sight of a holy God.

Let, then, the religion of love be propagated by such means as love sanctions, and all false systems will disappear in the same ratio as this religion prevails. First "make the tree good, and the fruit will be good also." Let the truth of God be aimed at the heart, and in such a spirit as shall convince the sinner, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mohammedan, Jew, or Pagan, that we are seeking his present and eternal welfare, and we shall succeed, if God see fit to second our endeavours, in effecting his salvation, by producing a radical change of his nature, and thus stripping him of all false depend-

ence upon either himself or upon lifeless rites and ceremonies. Any conversion that stops short of this will be of no lasting benefit. A mere formal conversion from one system of religion to another, though it may be from a false to a true one, which is unaccompanied by this thorough change of heart, inseparably connected, as such a change always is, with a righteous life, only affects the sinner's outward relation, leaving him, at heart, an impenitent sinner still.

Here, then, has been, in my judgment, the grand error of most of those who have arrayed themselves against the Roman Catholics. They have, apparently at least, sought to load them with disgrace, stigmatized them with opprobrious epithets, calling them nicknames, refusing even to recognize them by the name by which they have chosen to be distinguished, calling their Church the "whore of Babylon," and its members the descendants of the "beast and false prophet," &c., and have finally formed an association with the professed object to "put them down." I very much doubt the propriety of all this. These imprudent measures have produced directly the contrary effect to what was anticipated by their authors and abettors. Both in Great Britain and the United States the Papists have steadily, and indeed rapidly, increased

in numbers and influence since these measures have been in operation.

There are three parties in our country which compose society, and of course which form the public, out of which the public sentiment is formed. The first is the Christian party—those who are sincerely desirous of promoting the present and eternal welfare of themselves and their fellow-men, regardless of sects and denominations. These are the minority, though they are gradually increasing. The second is what may be called nominally Christian, or politico-religious, and are swayed pretty much by the wind of politics, and are urgent to go the way this wind blows the strongest. The third is made up of mere politicians, and it is composed of semi-infidels, skeptics, or open, bare-faced infidels, forming, to be sure, a small minority. They are looking on with a suspicious eye upon the movements of the Christian world, watching for their faults, espying with the keenness of a vulture's eye any and every misstep that is taken by Christians, that they may find something to feed their infidelity, or to strengthen their prejudice against Christianity. They do not discriminate between one form of religion and another, but look upon all its forms alike, and use them just so far as they will answer their

political purposes, and no farther. Their sympathies are enlisted with the weaker party, and more especially if they appear to be persecuted or oppressed in any way by the stronger. The Roman Catholics are the minority in our country, and yet, as they generally vote all on the same side, these wily politicians are anxious to secure their suffrage, and in order to this, will promise them offices in the state, flatter their vanity, attend their meetings, and otherwise favour their religious institutions.

These men have been no indifferent spectators to the contest which has been going on between the Protestants and Roman Catholics, and they have considered, and very justly too, in my opinion, the latter as the injured party, and therefore have very naturally sympathized with them, and have thus increased their number and influence. This, together with the constant influx of Irish and German immigrants, has tended to swell the number of this class among us to an enormous amount, and it is still augmenting with an increasing ratio.

Now the question to be answered is, What methods shall be adopted to do them good? They are in our midst—they mingle in our families—associate with our children—do our work—and consequently we have it in our power to

instruct them in the principles of pure and undefiled religion, and to set them an example, in our daily intercourse with them, of exemplary piety. If they behold in us the same pride, love of self, vain glory, love of money, of sensual pleasure, as are exhibited among themselves, what motive will they have to change their religion? If a Protestant priest manifest the same *hauteur*, the same luxurious indolence, the same love of power and pomp, as the Roman Catholic priest does, by what argument shall the latter be convinced that the former is any better than he? All argument, in these circumstances, will be absolutely unavailing. The best way, and indeed the only way, to convert the Roman Catholics, as Wesley said, is "to out-live them, and out-preach them."

The fact is, and I rejoice that it is so, all combinations among professed Christians, formed with the avowed object to put down another sect, however erroneous that sect may be, will always be considered, by the enlightened, impartial part of the community, as a species of persecution incompatible with the genius of Christianity, and hence will inevitably tend to enlist the public sympathy, and turn the public sentiment in favour of the persecuted sect. And I scruple not to say that all such combinations,

gotten up with such objects, are unscriptural, anti-Christian, deriving no sanction from apostolic example. The apostles went forth under the sanction and direction of their divine Master, unaided by any human authority, to proclaim the willingness of Almighty God to save sinners of every description, whether Jews or Gentiles, knowing full well that all who embraced their message with believing and obedient hearts would be saved, not only from their sins, but also from all those erroneous forms by which they had been held in bondage. This was the apostolic example. This same example was followed by Luther, by Wesley, and by every successful reformer. They began by first embracing the truth themselves; and, feeling its transforming power in their own hearts, were constrained to preach it to their fellow-sinners. In doing this they were soon led to see and abjure the errors in which they had been so long held, and, without suspecting it at first, they gradually undermined the foundation of that vast fabric of error on which the rotten superstructure had so long rested, and all the genuine converts fled from it as from a baseless edifice which could not shelter them from coming destruction.

Had Wesley entered the arena of controversy

respecting Church order, the power of bishops, and the various corruptions which infested the Church of England, he would have spent his strength for naught, and wasted his energies in empty declamation. Instead of this useless warfare, he aimed the truth directly to the sinner's heart, knowing perfectly well that if a reformation were effected there, all the rest would follow as a necessary consequence. The same course he pursued toward the Roman Catholics, and many of them were soundly converted through the searching appeals of his ministry to their consciences.

This method will prove successful, for I am fully persuaded that there is no disease in the human heart so inveterate but that it may be removed, provided the remedy of the divine Physician be timely and suitably applied, and believingly received. Nor is there any error, however complicated, but what may be detected and scattered by the bright and penetrating rays of eternal truth. Remove prejudice from the heart, break down its opposition to God, and the clouds of error which hang over the understanding will easily be dispersed by the presentation of truth—simply *THE truth as it is in Jesus*. And when the understanding is thus opened for the reception of *this* truth, the dis-

ease of the heart is revealed to the sinner himself, so pressingly as to extort the humiliating confession, "I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes." When the spiritual disease is thus revealed to the sinner himself—no matter what his profession may have been before, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jew, or heathen—and is confessed with an "humble and penitent heart," then is the time to apply the remedy, to bring as vividly as possible before the mind's eye the all-sufficient Physician of the sin-sick soul, and to urge upon his acceptance, with a believing heart, the sovereign balm for his wounded spirit. No one ever prayerfully and believingly tried this remedy in vain. On the contrary, thousands of living witnesses have been raised up, in every age of the Church, who could feelingly testify to the experimental efficacy of this divine remedy, and tens of thousands are now living who can corroborate the truth of their testimony.

Now that this remedy may prove efficacious, it must be presented in the same spirit of love with which the Saviour provided it. And let it be remembered, that while he boldly rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and condemned them for trusting in outward observances for salvation, he did not in the first

instance assault their system of religion, but even sent those whom he had healed to the priests, that they might be purified, according to the prescriptions of the Levitical law: but that trait in his character which I would more particularly recommend, is the love that he manifested even to his most inveterate enemies, offering for his very crucifiers, while suffering the agonies of the cross, that most expressive prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" thus making an apology for his murderous enemies, while suffering the effect of their malice. Let a portion of this love possess and actuate the hearts of God's ministers and people, in all their attempts to convert sinners, whether they be Roman Catholics or others, and the God of love will crown their efforts with success, so far at least as to smile upon their labours, and leave a favourable impression upon their hearts, and upon the hearts of their hearers.

If all our missionaries, at home and abroad, were deeply imbued with this heavenly spirit, whether they labour among Roman Catholics, Protestants, Mohammedans, Jews, or heathens, addressing themselves directly to the heart, trusting in God alone for "the increase," who can doubt that the walls of prejudice, supersti-

tion, and idolatry would speedily fall before the blasts of truth? Let fiery, narrow-hearted bigots contend about their peculiarities, dispute concerning little, unimportant matters, and labour to build up their sect merely, while the inspired messenger of the cross, with his heart filled and expanded with the love of God and man, shall distinguish himself as a flaming herald of good news to all men, regardless of creeds and confessions, any further than they interfere with the essentials of Christianity. Such a man will never be confounded. God will give him a mouth, which, however wide he may open it, shall be filled with words and arguments—so filled with truth, that all his enemies shall not be able to gainsay him. He will proclaim a risen, living Saviour, and his hearers will know for themselves that “He ever liveth to make intercession for them,” because he hath shed down upon them the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Time for action—Claims superior to the ancient crusade—This peaceful and saving—Home work—Common error to be avoided—If the whole Methodist Episcopal Church were deeply devoted and actively engaged, how much good might be accomplished—Much more were the entire evangelical world thus engaged—Sanctification gives enlarged views—Contrast between such and others—Were ministers and people thus devoted, how much good would be done—This may be accomplished—Motives to try.

NEVER was there a time which called louder for self-sacrifice, for active and untiring zeal in the cause of God, than the present. God is, indeed, pouring his blessings upon us in rich profusion. And to those who can discern the "signs of the times," it must appear most manifest that doors are opened and opening in almost every land and nation for the promulgation of evangelical truth. These doors must be entered by the man of God, the "land must be possessed," the walls of prejudice, superstition, and idolatry, must be demolished, the "tall sons of Anak" must be conquered in the name of the Lord of hosts. The priests and the Levites must enter the enemies' territories sword in hand—but it must be the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"—and take peaceable possession of the goodly land. This land must be culti-

vated until the "wilderness becomes a fruitful field." In a word, heathenism, and every other false system of religion, must be assaulted by this sword of the Spirit, until they yield to the reiterated strokes of truth, and fall prostrate before the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A very different crusade this from that undertaken by the valiant knights who girded on the sword and helmet, and marched in military array for the conquest of the holy land, and to rescue the holy sepulchre from the profane hands of infidels. These were impelled by an enthusiasm kindled by military ardour, fed and inflamed by the preaching of Peter the Hermit, and by the prospect of civil and temporal dominion, connected, to be sure, with the false hope of future reward. But if these chivalrous knights could be induced to sacrifice their domestic comforts for the purpose of embarking in such a hazardous and distant enterprise, and all for the sake of so uncertain a reward, and in the accomplishment of their object must subject themselves to such hardships, and expose their persons to death on the field of battle, and likewise carry death and destruction to every land they conquered, with what holy ardour should the Christian soldier be inspired, who marches forth protected by the "powers that be," all of

whom God has so far either chained, or so softened down, as to make them favour the cause of his Divine Master—who, instead of carrying devastation with him, goes proclaiming “peace and good-will to man”—who is inspired with the certain prospect of a present and eternal reward !

Here then is an object sufficiently grand to call forth all the energies of the Church, to awaken all her sympathies, and to employ all her means and capabilities of doing good, of exerting all her united strength for the conquest of the world to our Immanuel.

But while we are looking abroad, we must not be unmindful of our work at home. Indeed, if we neglect our own hearts—if we cease to cultivate a spirit of deep piety in the churches in our own immediate neighbourhood—if we do not urge upon ourselves and all with whom we have intercourse the necessity of “forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to the things which are before”—if we do not continually press upon ourselves and all our people the absolute necessity of “going on to perfection,” of attaining that “perfect love which casts out fear”—we shall soon sink into a spirit of lukewarmness which will unfit us for energetic action, and render us powerless in the

work in which we are professedly engaged. If we allow the love of the world to absorb our attention, the pursuit of wealth to engage our affections, we shall thereby render our ministrations flat and insipid. If we suffer the spirit of intrigue to insinuate itself into our counsels, by which the strong tries to supplant the weak, the selfish to triumph over the honest, faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus, and an unholy rivalry to jostle us against each other, so as to give evidence that we are more ambitious for places of honour and profit, than we are to occupy posts of labour and sacrifice in the cause of Christ, we shall have departed from the simplicity of the Gospel, and forfeited the character of holy Christian ministers.

I said we must not forget or neglect our own hearts. Here is an error into which we are very prone to fall. Like “busybodies in other men’s matters,” we become extremely anxious for others, while we are quite neglectful of our own affairs. Like tattlers, who employ their tongues in aspersing their neighbours’ characters, while they are entirely heedless of their own conduct any farther than in backbiting their neighbours; so it is with many professed Christians who delight in finding fault with neighbouring churches, and casting the stigma of reproach upon all who

cannot pronounce the shibboleth of their party, while they totally neglect their own hearts, and are therefore strangers to that deep experience of the love of God which distinguishes the holy Christian, and that intimate communion with God, through faith in Christ, which results from a sanctified nature. The spirit of deep experimental and practical piety must be kept up in the Church, if we would have the work of religion prevail abroad. The fire of divine love must be kept continually burning upon our domestic and Church altars, in order that its pure flame may be irradiated all around us; and when this is the case, our "light will so shine before others, that they will see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

Now, if the whole Methodist Episcopal Church, or even the great majority of its members, ministers, and people, consisting of upwards of 700,000, were thus deeply devoted to God, the ministers taking the lead in every good work, going before the people, devising and executing plans of usefulness, setting them an example of holy living and acting, so that they could confidently say to them, "Follow us, as we follow Christ;"—if this were exemplified, what a vast amount of good might be accomplished in a very short time! If the whole Methodist family, in Europe

and America, numbering upwards of 1,500,000 souls, were thus devoted, thus holy, thus actively engaged in the cause of God, how much more extensively would their influence be felt ! But were the whole evangelical world to lay aside those little points of discrepancy on which they may not perfectly agree, and unite their strength and combine their energies, and make one simultaneous onset upon the empire of sin and Satan, how long would it be ere its gigantic power should crumble to the dust ? And why, I ask, in the name of our common Christianity, why may not this be done ?

That enlarged benevolence which is begotten in the heart by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit, gives that expansive view of things which leads the individual who is under its influence to lose sight of those little, unimportant things, concerning which the narrow, contracted soul is chiefly solicitous, and to fix his attention on those essential truths which emanate from God, concentrate in Jesus Christ, and which are revealed and exemplified in the Gospel of our salvation. Under the influence of these truths, which, penetrating the depths of his soul, burn within him like "fire shut up in his bones," he is impelled forward in the grand work of conquering the world to Jesus Christ. While the

hard-hearted bigot is tormenting himself about all his little peculiarities, and is so scrupulous about comparatively trifling rites and ceremonies as to neglect the "weightier matters of the law, justice, and the love of God," the man whose heart is enlarged by the love of God and man, and his intellect expanded by a comprehensive view of things, will look at these essential truths, and throwing himself, with all the weight of his talent and influence, upon the broad ocean of God's unbounded goodness, he launches forth in quest of immortal souls—he becomes a successful "fisher of men." The little, cramped-up soul, will dispute for an hour whether a presbyter should be called an elder or a bishop, or about some other equally unimportant matter, as whether we may wear a strait or double-breasted coat; while the deeply devoted minister of Jesus Christ, leaving these trifles to be settled by those who have nothing else to do, is reaching forth his hand to the lost world, is devising liberal things for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and is preaching with all his might, "peace to him that is near, and to him that is afar off."

Behold the contrast between the man whose soul is drivelled up by the withering influence of a selfish sectarian prejudice, whose heart is

contracted by a childish attachment to the puerilities of unessential peculiarities, and he whose heart palpitates under an emotion created by God's universal love to mankind, this love filling all the avenues of his soul—whose understanding is so enlightened that he can take a comprehensive survey of the divine administration;—the latter loses sight, in some sense, of himself; and while he surveys the state and wants of the human family, he cries out, in the language of the apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth me," and impels me on to "reach even beyond myself," far beyond my own little sphere of action, by exciting others as well as myself in this holy warfare. This is the man of God! While the lilliputian soul, contracted by a supreme love of self, draws a circle around himself, and makes everything contribute to his own self-exaltation, calling all that move within that circle his friends, and repelling all others as enemies; the man of God, whose soul is expanded by the eternal Spirit, draws a circle around the universe, and though he may not count all within it his personal friends, he is sure that no one has any cause to be his enemy, because his heart overflows with love and good-will to all men—and with his heart throbbing and heaving with pulsations of compassion for the souls of the whole world,

basing his declaration upon the broad commission of his risen Lord and Master, he adopts the memorable saying of the immortal Wesley, "The world is my parish."

How great the contrast! The narrow mind and contracted heart of the selfish egotist, with his views limited to the little sphere in which he moves, and his eyes dimmed with the love of ease, or the more contemptible passion, the love of money, indulges himself in espying and exposing the faults of others, in transmuting a foible into a crime, and magnifying an innocent infirmity into a wilful sin, until the corroding jealousy of his heart eats out every good and kindlier feeling he might have once possessed, and he finally settles down into a moody melancholy, by which he makes himself and all that come within his reach discontented, and unhappy because he and they are discontented. Not so the holy man of God. His heart continually palpitates with a delightful view of the goodness of God, and dilates with pious gratitude for the profusion of His past mercies, from a consciousness of present blessings, and from the blooming prospect which looms up before him. So far from complaining, and whining over the failings, whether real or imaginary, of his brethren, stunning the ears of his friends

with his piteous moanings on the infirmities of others, he marches forward, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, sword in hand, boldly encounters difficulties as they occur, avails himself of every favourable opportunity of enlarging the sphere of his usefulness, and encourages all with whom he has intercourse, by reminding them of the bright prospect before them, as well as by admonishing them of the dangers which surround them, provided they faint in the way, to persevering diligence in the cause of God. This is the man—this the minister, who fulfils the high behests of his Sovereign!

Now, if the Methodist ministers and people were thus actively engaged—were thus to consecrate their all, soul and body, time and substance, to the service of mankind, how extensive would be their influence! If all our academies and colleges were thus hallowed, thus sanctified to God, what noble-hearted youth would pour forth from their sacred enclosures, fully prepared, not only by literature and science, but also by pure religion, for the ministry of reconciliation, and for any other useful profession. With what soul-stirring eloquence would these youth, thus “baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire,” “preach the unsearchable riches of Christ!” Instead of entertaining their hearers with a dry,

monotonous sound of words without meaning, and lulling them to sleep with curious disquisitions on mere speculative points of philosophy, or even of divinity, they would enter into the soul, dive into the depths of the human heart, and make the sinner feel the weight of his sins, and tremble under a sense of his high responsibility to God—he would believingly point the penitent mourner to the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” nor leave him until he is thoroughly washed from all his sins, and made “white in the blood of the Lamb.”

And who will say that this cannot be done? Who will say that it is impossible for the Church thus to arise in the strength of God, be clothed with the garments of salvation, be thoroughly equipped for the warfare, and “go forth from conquering to conquer?”

Let him say it who has not faith in God. Let him whose gloomy apprehension is always foreboding evil; who delights—if indeed he has any delight—in looking upon the dark side of everything—who distrusts the promises of God, has no confidence in the prophetic Scriptures, nor any expectation of the universal spread of the Gospel—let such a one sit down and pine over the sad state of this world, and the back-

slidings of God's people, and discourage all with whom he comes in contact, by saying "that there are giants in the land," with whom it is in vain for these feeble few, already "shorn of their strength," to contend, while the Calebs and Joshuas among us shall silence their disheartening clamour by asserting, "We are well able to go up and possess the land." Let such "gird up the loins of their mind," and putting on the "breast-plate of faith, and for hope the helmet of salvation," look up to the God of all grace, in the full confidence of earnest prayer, and go forth in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall prosper in the glorious work in which they are engaged.

I must beg permission for one more chapter, in which I shall endeavour to make a short recapitulation of the whole subject, and bring it to bear with solemn weight upon the consciences of all concerned.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Recapitulation—defects allowed—Facts and arguments unavailable—Thanks to those who have volunteered their aid—Anonymous assailants unworthy of notice—Comparison between her present strength and former feebleness—Two characters prone to find fault—The sleepy professor and the one recently awakened—Bright prospects—Much yet remains to be done—subjects chiefly dwelt upon—How the work must be spread—The work of sanctification must be pressed—A word to the Methodists—Entire consecration necessary to the realization of our hopes.

I HAVE endeavoured to show that the Methodists have made rapid improvements in numbers, in wealth, in church-building, in missionary and tract operations, in publishing books, in supporting their preachers, in founding academies and colleges, in literature and science, as well as in holiness of heart and life. The question has not been whether or not we are deficient in any of these particulars, but whether we are more deficient now than formerly. I have allowed all along that we are not as holy as we might be, nor, consequently, as extensively useful in the above departments as we might have been, had we been as unreservedly and as universally devoted to God as we should have been.

Who that surveys our past history, and compares our former feebleness in respect to num-

bers, wealth, intellectual and spiritual enjoyments, with our present state and our present advantages, but must be filled with adoring gratitude to God for what he hath wrought? In 1766 there were but five members, all immigrants, in the Methodist society in the city of New-York, and these were so poor and obscure that they assembled for divine worship in a private room, and Philip Embury, a local preacher, preached to them the first Methodist sermon ever preached in America.* But “behold how

* I heard it asserted, not long since, by a minister, that he did not believe we had as many church-members now in the city of New-York, in proportion to the population, as we had when we possessed only the old John-street church. This assertion led me to search and compare. I do not know to what particular year he alluded, and, indeed, he must have made a random shot, or he never would have shot so wide of the mark.

On looking at the Minutes for 1773, which is the oldest record we have, I find the number at that time in the Methodist society, in the city of New-York, to have been one hundred and eighty. I have no means of ascertaining the entire population of the city at that time, but I presume it did not exceed 25,000, as in 1790 there were 33,131, which is the oldest record of the population I can find. This would give one Methodist for about every one hundred and thirty-eight of the population. The present population cannot be over 500,000, and the number of church-members is 9,313, which will give one for about fifty-three.

So near the truth did this speaker come; that is to say, he fell about three times short of the actual truth! So little reliance can be placed upon vague conjectures, for I presume

great a matter a little fire kindleth !” The fire of Divine love which burned in their hearts soon kindled in others, and it has continued to burn and blaze until thousands have been melted down, and run into the mould of the Gospel, and they are now shining in all the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those five have multiplied so fast, that in eighty-four years they have increased, including the North and South, to upwards of 1,100,000. And, if we may judge from present indications, from the revivals now going on in different parts of the country, we may console ourselves in the belief that the fire continues to burn as intensely as ever; and I humbly trust that the many waters of strife, that the army of croakers shall throw upon it, will not be able to extinguish its pure flame.

It is now forty-seven years since I was received on trial in the New-York Conference. At that time there were 86,734 members in the United States. Now, as before said, there are upwards of 1,100,000, besides, perhaps, 100,000 connected with other bodies of Methodists, who that this speaker had never made a calculation with a view to ascertain the comparative strength of Methodism at the time to which he alluded. It shows, moreover, the danger of allowing our prejudices to guide our decisions, lest the tongue inadvertently utter an untruth.

have seceded from us, but hold fast to our doctrine and moral discipline, making, in all, about 1,200,000.

I wish those especially who are mourning over the desolations of the Church, and whiningly predicting the overthrow of pure religion, to look at these facts, and then to connect with them the further facts I have exhibited, namely, the increase of evangelical religion among other denominations, and see if they cannot derive an argument against their own melancholy hypothesis, that spiritual darkness is again spreading its gloom over the world.

There are two characters which are perpetually tormenting themselves, and filling all others with whom they come in contact with unbelief. The one is asleep himself, and therefore disqualified to see and judge of things as they are. Judging others by himself, he persuades himself that all others are asleep, and consequently he is dreaming over things in his morbid imagination, all of which are as unreal as the fitful visions conjured up in the brains of the wildest enthusiast. He is not unlike the drunkard, who imagines that the trees and the houses are falling over his head, and every person in the street is staggering, merely because he has his own brains turned by intoxicating liquor. The only difficulty is with

himself. Let his own head and heart get right, and he will feel and judge accurately respecting others. So let sleepy, dreaming professors of religion "awake to righteousness," and no longer indulge in their sinful sloth, and they will see things as they are, and will no longer torment themselves, and render all over whom they may have influence unhappy, by their doleful complaints that spectres and hobgoblins are infesting the Church with their foul and pestiferous breath.

The other probably has been dozing for years in a comparatively dormant state of religious profession; but, by some fortunate circumstance, he has been recently aroused from his slumbers, had his "eyes anointed with eye-salve"—with the oil of God's grace—and he erroneously imagines that all his fellow-professors are in a similar state to that from which he has been so mercifully delivered: in this excited state he sounds the alarm, as though the entire Church, except himself and a few others of kindred spirit, were all still asleep in the arms of Satan. His puny attacks excite only the smile of contempt on the face of all well-disposed persons, whose maturity of experience and enlightened judgment qualify them to give an impartial decision, while a feeling of pity is begotten in the breasts of those who take an

enlarged and comprehensive view of the whole subject, and consequently draw their conclusions from indisputable data.

These erroneous views, arising from a partial and contracted survey of the subject, do immense harm. They not only tend to cast a gloom over the mind of the devoted Christian,—that is, so far as they are heeded,—but they discourage the timid believer, make the faint-hearted still more faint, and, like the irresolute spies who brought up an evil report from the land of Canaan, they spread death over the camp of our Israel, and beget unbelief in the hearts of those who otherwise would be “strong in the Lord of hosts, and the power of his might.” Let then the Calebs and Joshuas arise, and put to flight this army of everlasting croakers, who are ever and anon crying out, the Methodists are fallen—the ministers are shorn of their strength, and the people are sharing in their weakness.

Instead of indulging in these mournful complaints, let us

“Praise God for all that is past,
And trust him for all that’s to come.”

We have seen how the expansive power of this religion has swelled the hearts of God’s people, until they have overflowed with love and good-will to man; and those streams of divine

love have flowed out so plentifully that they have watered the fields of our neighbours. Hence the several members of the great spiritual family are acting unitedly, combining their strength and influence to carry destruction into the enemies' territories, and to introduce and establish therein the kingdom of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These things considered in connexion with the "signs of the times," namely, the diffusion of the principles of civil freedom and religious toleration among the heathen and Mohammedan nations, the prostration of the temporal power of the Pope,* the crushing of civil despotism, seem to

* Since the above was written, I see there is a prospect of the return of the Pope to his temporal dominion. But though the French nation has disgraced itself by thus falsifying the principles on which its late revolution was founded, and violated its constitution by interfering in the government of other nations—and though it may succeed in reinstating the Pope in his former position—it remains to be seen whether he will long hold his power, and whether the fire of liberty which has been kindled up in Italy and other states of Europe shall be extinguished, or whether it will not again break forth with increased violence, and burn up the "hay, wood, and stubble," which have so long encumbered the ground on which those kingdoms have been built, and on which their rotten superstructures now rest, though in a very insecure state.

These thoughts induce me to leave the sentence in the text the same as I wrote it, more than a year since.

indicate the near approach of that day of millennial glory, so long since predicted, and so long expected by the Christian Church.

Notwithstanding, however, these favourable symptoms in the body politic, and these evidences of new life in the body ecclesiastic, there still remains much, very much indeed, to be done before the universal reign of Jesus Christ shall be seen and felt. To accomplish this grand consummation, the Church must arise in the majesty of her strength, or, rather, in the strength of her divine Head, and in His Name put forth her utmost energies, regardless of danger, regardless of the sacrifice of wealth, of labour, both in the ministry and membership, and unitedly go forth to the conquest of the world. So far from this being a time to pause in our career of usefulness, to rest from our labour, or to relax in any measure in our efforts, it is *the time*—the *very time*—for renewed exertions—for renewed sacrifices—and for the exercise of strong faith in God—for unremitting and prayerful diligence in the cause of man's salvation.

These are the subjects chiefly dwelt upon in the preceding numbers. How far they are calculated to accomplish their design, I presume not to determine; but this one thing I am fully conscious of, and that is, that they have been

penned under a high sense of responsibility; and hence I have found my own heart much enlarged and warmed with divine love while thus employed, and feel therefore that I have not run without being sent.

Should then any one find himself quickened into new life and activity by reading what I have written, let him give God the glory, and then enter upon his work with renovated faith and courage. If only thus much is done, I shall not lose my reward; for he that is thus affected will communicate the holy impulse he may feel to another, and that other to his fellow-Christian, and so the work will spread from heart to heart, until, finally, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," and the wake, though small in the beginning, will continually enlarge its circumference until it shall be co-extensive with the whole human family. As to making a general and simultaneous impression upon the whole Church, much less upon the whole world, at one and the same time, I have no faith in it, though doubtless the work of reformation will become more and more general, more and more deep and genuine, as it progresses, —the work of justification and sanctification will continually increase in power and influence, and the holy example of God's people will be more

and more powerfully felt, and hence will be of more and more beneficial influence. We must therefore first excite one to renewed action, by strengthening his faith in the promises of God, and he will lead another, and then others, and thus a powerful stimulus will be applied to the hearts of God's people, and so the movement will continually enlarge its circumference, until finally the whole Christian world will be in a vigorous motion in the right direction. "The Spirit and the bride" must first "say, Come," and then those who obey the invitation will join their fellows in saying "Come," and they will ultimately all unite in one simultaneous cry, uttering the thrilling invitation, "Let whosoever will, come, and take of the waters of life freely."

What I wish above all other things is, that I may be instrumental, in the first place, in causing the Methodists, in the way just now indicated, to see and duly appreciate the high obligations they are under to Almighty God, in consequence of their innumerable and unmerited blessings, to dedicate themselves, in soul and body, in time and substance, to God—that they should seek after—seek with earnestness—with persevering faith and prayer,—an entire sanctification of their natures—to make an entire consecration of their all to the service of God. Let this be their

primary object—the mark at which they constantly aim. Let the ministers, from a deep conviction of its attainableness, press the necessity of this home upon themselves and all their people. Let the ministers especially remember that they who bear the vessels of the Lord should have clean hands and pure hearts. God's design is that the sons of Levi should be holy, for then shall their offerings be well-pleasing in His sight.

This accomplished, they will feel the energies of the Holy Spirit working mightily in them, begetting a holy ardour in the cause of God, which will prompt them to every good word and work. Their “work of faith and labour of love” will be acceptable, and their prayers will be heard and answered. The pride of sect, the pride of self, that cursed love of money, by which so many souls are ruined, and the character of some ministers blasted forever—the love of personal aggrandizement, and the pride of Pharisaism, will all be destroyed, and the love of God and man, that burning desire which prompts its possessor to continual acts of self-denial, to deeds of noble heroism in the cause of Christ, will have taken the place of those earth-born passions, and all such will move forward in one firm and harmonious phalanx against

error and sin, and never lay down their arms until the world is conquered to Christ.

To my more immediate brethren I beg permission to say, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." That God had a special design, and that a benevolent one, in raising up the Methodists, I have no doubt. So long as they continue to be "co-workers with Him," strive to promote His cause with all purity and sincerity, He will continue to smile upon them, and prosper the work of their hearts and hands. If, however, they should cease thus to do, but should "turn aside to vain jangling," preach or write from vain glory, seek to be great instead of studying to be good, they may expect God's frown to be substituted for His smile, and they will soon sink down into a spirit of lukewarmness, will gradually imbibe a vain-glorious spirit, and finally be distinguished for having a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

On the other hand, if they shall live up to their high and distinguished privileges, improve their advantages with conscientious diligence, and unitedly go forward in their work, preaching their doctrine, enforcing their discipline, so as to "purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness," wherever it is found,

whether in high or low places, God will make them still a praise in the earth, and they shall continue to be instrumental in diffusing light and heat—the light of truth and the heat of love—throughout the wide circle of their influence.

That this may be done, and that these anticipations may be fully realized, let us consecrate ourselves anew to the service of God. Laying aside our bickerings about little, unimportant things, and “forgetting the things which are behind, let us press towards the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” May God send his choicest benedictions upon his Church, and cause her to become “the perfection of beauty,” out of which he “shall continue to shine” until the whole world shall become enlightened, and raise one universal song of praise to God, “who hath washed them, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

APPENDIX.

No. I.

An examination of the definition, "Methodism without philosophy"—A reply to P.—Two errors do not constitute a truth—The author deviates from his general rule, for the purpose of testing the solidity of the above maxim—He acknowledges an inadvertence in language—On this account excuses P. for some things he has said, but rebukes him for others—These things an evidence of human infirmity—The erroneousness of the definition—It excludes doctrines, usages, and ordinances—Makes Methodism without body and soul—The definition denied—It contemns God's inspired messengers—the reformers—Wesley himself—Theological schools not the nurseries of heresies—Proved in sundry instances—Nor are colleges—An apology for these schools—May be useful—If Methodism be religion without philosophy, then no true religion till Methodism arose—This proved—What Methodism is.

Is "Methodism religion without philosophy?" I think not. For dissenting, however, from this assumed apothegm, I have been taken to task by an anonymous writer in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* of March 8, 1849, in which he endeavours to make it appear that I have been equally inconsistent with the author of the above definition of Methodism. Allowing this to be true, I perceive not how it can prove the accuracy of the definition, unless the writer absurdly supposes that two inconsistencies can produce one consistency, or that two errors can constitute a truth.

For the purpose of an examination of the truth of this definition of Methodism, and of testing the solidity of the reasoning of P., as my anonymous and friendly antagonist has chosen to designate himself, I have concluded to deviate, in this instance, from my general rule, not to notice an anonymous assailant, and endeavour to furnish an answer to some of his allegations. I can do this now the more leisurely, and, I trust, also in the spirit of brotherly love, as I have finished my numbers on the State and Responsibilities of the Church, and have consequently had time to pray over and to deliberate upon it. Indeed, I was determined not to be diverted from the course marked out for me by any trivial cause, until I had completed what I had to say on those subjects. My friend P. will please accept this as an apology for delaying so long to notice his brotherly strictures.

In the first place, I have to acknowledge a little inadvertence in my language in the piece on which P. animadverts, in saying that the Methodists had “added” to the cardinal doctrines I had just enumerated that of “entire sanctification of soul and body to God, or holiness of heart and life,” which inadvertence has afforded P. a gracious opportunity of displaying his wit, by an unmeaning play upon words, as though, because I had perpetrated a blunder, therefore his friend was unquestionably right. This is just as logical as it would be for me to conclude, that because B. is guilty of drunkenness, therefore A. is justified in profane swearing.

But, in consideration of the above inadvertence in language, I excuse P. for some things he has said, though they amount to just nothing in his favour, as we shall more fully see presently; and proceed to remark, that it by no means excuses him from quoting me wrong in another particular. He represents me as saying that we had “added” “the direct witness of the Spirit, with its inseparable fruits;” whereas my words are, “I know not but that I should add the doctrine of the direct witness, and its inseparable results, the fruits of the Spirit; as these, however closely they may be incorporated in their articles of faith, and alluded to in their formularies of devotion, are not insisted upon by other denominations as they should be, in their public instructions, or in the inculcations of the pulpit.” Now, is not here a full acknowledgment that this doctrine of the witness and fruits of the Spirit was held by the other denominations to which I allude?—and therefore I introduced the remarks by the hypothetical phrase, “I know not,” intimating thereby that I doubted the propriety of saying that this should be added, because I was aware that it was “incorporated in their articles of faith, and alluded to in their formularies of devotion,” and hence I mentioned it merely because it was not “insisted upon as it should be in their public instructions.”

The same should have been said, I allow, in respect to “entire sanctification, or holiness of heart and life,” as this doctrine is also contained in their “articles of faith, and alluded to in their formula-

ries of devotion," "but it is brought out more prominently by us than it is by other denominations," which is the alteration I have made in the copy I have to print by, should the numbers be printed in a book.

Thus much I have thought it right to say, both in justice to myself and in excuse for my anonymous critic, as well as by way of rebuke for his inadvertence in misrepresenting me, by quoting my words erroneously. I have had too much experience in composing and transcribing not to know the difficulty of expressing one's self always accurately, or of selecting the most suitable word to convey the idea that occupies the mind, to attribute the above inaccuracy of P. to wilful misrepresentation; but he was so elated with the thought that he had caught me in a trap, and therefore could involve me in the same dilemma in which I had involved his friend, that he not only overlooked the illogical inference which he drew, namely, "that two wrongs make a right," but also, unintentionally, misquoted my words.

Leaving him and our readers to meditate upon these sad evidences of human infirmity, and taking, for the present, no further notice of the criticisms of my unknown friend P., whose remarks speak more favourably for his heart than they do for his head, I will now endeavour to test the soundness of the maxim, that "Methodism is religion without philosophy." That I might not misapprehend the author, I have re-read the article on that subject in

the Methodist Quarterly Review, and am more deeply than ever convinced of the utter absurdity of the definition.

Whoever will read that article with attention, will find that its author excludes from Methodism all its doctrines, whether peculiar or otherwise, even the witness of the Spirit, the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification; all its peculiar modes of operation, such as class-meetings, and the itinerancy, or any other peculiarity by which we have been all along distinguished; none of these things, according to him, make any part of Methodism. Why not? Simply, the author says, because it existed without and before them. Well, then, according to this writer's opinion, Methodism could exist and flourish independently of the doctrine of the eternity and unity, and other perfections of God; the Deity, incarnation, and atonement of Christ; the doctrine of repentance, justification, and sanctification of the sinner, and all those cardinal truths by which we have been characterized from the beginning, and likewise all those usages by which we have been distinguished from other denominations.

These excluded, what have we left? Why, a "*religion without philosophy.*" Yes, and without divinity too. For if all our doctrines are discarded as constituting no part of Methodism, then we have a Methodism that is a religion without doctrines! But, according to him, both our class-meetings and itinerancy may be laid aside, as neither do they constitute any part of Methodism, because, says he,

it existed before them. Here, then, we have a Methodism stripped of all its doctrines, of its mode of propagating them, in a word, of all its cardinal principles, and all its external features; for he says that its church organization is no part of it, inasmuch as it existed before any such organization, and finally stripped of its philosophy. Pray tell us what we have left. It has neither a soul nor a body. It may, therefore, be classed with Berkeley and Hume's ideal world, having no existence but in the imagination of deluded mortals.

What perception can we possibly form of a religion destitute of all its fundamental principles, and of all its peculiar modes of operation, and which, therefore, has neither shape nor consistence?

It has, in fact, neither doctrines, organization, ordinances, nor any peculiar means of procedure, such as class-meetings and the itinerancy, and hence it is bereft of every feature of either shape or substance, not having even the meager form of "*philosophy*" to distinguish it among its fellowisms.

But, independently of these absurd puerilities, I positively deny that "*Methodism is religion without philosophy*," unless the author meant by philosophy, a false, spurious, skeptical philosophy, which, from the subsequent parts of his article, it appears he did not; for surely he did not mean to assert, as censorious as he was upon Methodist preachers, that they had adopted such a system of infidel philosophy, by the adoption of which they had vitiated their Metho-

dism, and rendered their ministrations inert, inefficient, and powerless. He must have meant, therefore, that philosophy which is distinguished by a course of consecutive reasoning, otherwise his observations could have no point, no appropriateness; for surely he did not spend his strength to prove that pure religion was not mixed up with an infidel philosophy, and that the Methodist preachers, for whose special benefit he wrote, had incorporated this spurious offspring of a disordered imagination into their method of preaching.

Now, to say that philosophy, or a method of consecutive reasoning, is incompatible with Methodism, or pure religion, is to condemn God's inspired prophets, the Lord Jesus, and his apostles, who all reasoned with the people in the most cogent manner, as well as delivered their messages in an authoritative or commanding style. To quote the numerous texts of sacred Scripture in support of this assertion would be almost an endless task, as the Bible abounds with examples of this sort.

It is to condemn Wesley himself—to say nothing of all the reformers who preceded him—who was among the most acute and accomplished logicians of his age, whose writings abound with philosophical disquisitions, and whose treatise upon logic is among the most erudite, as well as short and comprehensive treatises we have upon that subject. And how severely did he criticise Locke for his aversion to logic! He teach a “*religion without philosophy!*” Never! Read his sermons, his appeal to men of

reason and religion, and his various tracts upon different subjects, and you will soon find yourself in company with a man that could bring all his vast intellectual powers to bear with luminous effect upon doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion, illustrating the whole by the finest touches of reason, or true philosophy. He could show, and did show, that the religion of the Bible was perfectly consonant with the purest dictates of reason; that it is founded in the immutable relations subsisting among God's rational creatures—their relation to God, to one another, and to the world, both animate and inanimate, around them. This was no "religion without philosophy," without doctrines, without forms of worship, a mere ideal thing—if it be not nonsense to call such an imaginary phantom a thing—existing I know not where.

But the object of the writer I am considering is obvious enough. He aimed a blow at theological seminaries. His remarks upon these show either a total misapprehension of their history and character, or, what is far worse, a culpable misrepresentation. He says, "that almost, if not fully, all the pestilential errors which have become prevalent in the several branches of the Church, may be traced to these seminaries."

This assertion, to say the least of it, betrays great prejudice against institutions which, though liable to great abuse—and what good thing has not been abused by the ignorance, selfishness, and pride of men, even the purest system of religion ever re-

vealed to the world*—have been instrumental of diffusing much light upon the world. But to say that “nearly all the pestilential errors in the several branches of the Church may be traced to theological seminaries,” shows an inexcusable inattention to ecclesiastical history, or a want of an accurate acquaintance with the current of events. This, coming as it does from a man who has made the profound discovery that “Methodism is religion without philosophy,” is deserving of a severer rebuke than I shall take it upon me to administer.

It is but sixty-five years since the first theological seminary was established in the United States, and this was founded by the Dutch Reformed Church, in New-Brunswick, N. J., in 1784. The next was established by the Congregationalists, in Andover, Mass., in 1808. Then followed the one in Princeton, N. J., in 1812, under the patronage of the Presbyterian Church. Since that time they have been established by nearly all the orthodox denominations in the country, and now amount to thirty-five,† including the one among the Methodists, in Concord, N. H.

Have these generated nearly all the heresies with

* “For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good, but, strain’d from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse:
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;
And vice sometimes by action dignified.”—*Shakspeare*.

† See American Almanac for 1848.

which the Church has been afflicted, and the pure truths of the Gospel corrupted? Unless our author counts the peculiarities of Calvinism among heresies, I know not a single heresiarch who has been fostered in any of these schools; and even allowing these to be heresies, they did not originate in these seminaries, for they were propagated long before these were founded. And Arianism, which sprang up in the 4th century, and Socinianism, or Unitarianism, which originated in the 16th century, or Universalism, which sprang up among the Reformers of the 17th century, allowing them to be heresies, did not originate from theological schools, but from men of a disputatious spirit, and too curious in their speculations on the Divine character, and of his designs to our fallen world.

As to mere modern heresies, such as Milleriteism, Mormonism, and other kindred sects of heretics, no man who is acquainted with their originators will accuse them of being over learned, or as having received their lessons in theological seminaries. In a word, though some of the heresiarchs were both learned and wise in worldly wisdom, the far greater number of them, and especially those who were distinguished by the grossness of their errors, were more characterized by their stupid ignorance, mixed it is true with much low cunning, than they were for either learning or piety. So far are these schools from being responsible for the absurdities involved in the above heresies, they have produced men of the most profound theological knowledge

and deep piety of which any age of the Church can boast.

If our author alludes to the ancient schools of the Church, which I presume he did not, his assertion is equally wide of the mark. Whence sprang the Gnostics, the Cerinthians, the Nazarenes, and the Ebionites, of the first and second centuries? Certainly not from theological schools, for there were none such in existence.* And whence originated Mohammedanism, the most corrupt and gigantic of

* I know that Mosheim supposes that there were such seminaries in the first and second centuries; but his learned translator, Murdock, very justly doubts the fact, and indeed makes it evident that the schools referred to could have been no higher than catechetical schools, designed for the initiation of young people into the principles of Christianity. They were not intended for the theological instruction of ministers. The schools afterwards established in Alexandria, and other places, I grant, by being taught by men who were but half Christians, at best, became the prolific source of numerous errors. By endeavouring to blend the Platonic philosophy with Christianity, they gradually corrupted the latter, until it finally degenerated into a gloomy system of monkery and superstition.

From this same source originated the scholastic theology, which professed to explain Scripture facts and truths by the rules of metaphysics. But these schools were not established for the exclusive benefit of ministers, though many of them were educated in them. They were as unlike our modern theological seminaries as the cloak of St. Paul was to a modern surplice. But I presume our author had no reference to those ancient schools, but to modern theological seminaries. See Mosh., vol. i, pp. 81, 111, 168, 177, 178, 182, 262, 320, 387, 408, 435.

all the heresies which ever brooded over our world ? Was its author educated in a theological seminary ? He arose in the seventh century ; and was so ignorant of letters that he could neither read nor write, from which his followers inferred the divinity of his mission. And this proves incontestably that error or heresy is oftener associated with unlettered ignorance than with sound learning ; for the more deeply and soundly learned a man is, and especially if he be pious, the more modest and humble he is ; whereas an ignorant fanatic—and all errorists are fanatics—is characterized by unblushing effrontery. Of the truth of this Mohammed is a witness—and the father of Mormonism another.

These pestilential heresies originated from that pride which is always associated with ignorance, and displays its folly in being “ wise above what is written.” And so all the destructive heresies which originated from time to time in the early ages of the Church, may be traced, not to Christian schools, of which there were exceedingly few, and those few were designed chiefly for catechumens, but to the morbid imagination of men who endeavoured to blend Christianity with the fanciful reveries of heathen mythology, Platonic philosophy, and Jewish fable. But what have these to do with theological seminaries, as now constituted and conducted ?

If the writer under review means by theological seminaries, those colleges where the arts and sciences are taught, together with such theological studies as are pursued by those students who are designed for

the Gospel ministry, then his declaration is equally erroneous, as comparatively few of these have been heretical, though they have generally fallen short of a thorough training in experimental and practical divinity. And as to these schools or colleges, we are indebted to them, under the grace of God, for some of the greatest lights the world has ever seen. All the reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Knox, Cranmer, were thorough scholars, learned in all the arts and sciences, deeply read in history and philosophy. And were not Wesley and Fletcher taught in colleges, and were they a whit behind any of their fellow-students in sound learning, in deep experience, as well as in true philosophy? Heresies are oftener found, as before remarked, associated with unlettered ignorance, than with those whose minds have been expanded with learning. And who shall defend Christianity when it is assailed by the cunning artifices of an infidel philosophy, by the ingenious sophistries of learned skeptics? Can ignorance grapple with these giant intellects? Can unlettered men meet learned infidels, who profess to derive their objections from history, ancient and modern, from verbal criticisms upon the meaning of the learned languages, and from philosophical disquisitions which profess to dive into the nature of things? If the Church had been left to such unlettered defenders, she would have been long since buried beneath the rubbish of error, of heresy, and unbelief.

I am no advocate for theological seminaries, con-

sidered distinct and apart from our colleges, though I am far from believing that they either have been or are the nurseries of heresies. Nor can I see any reason why sound theology may not be taught, guarded, and defended as thoroughly in a theological school, as it can be in the closet or in the pulpit. May not these schools be put under the tuition of orthodox ministers, deeply experienced in divine things? and may they not urge upon their pupils Scriptural doctrines, the necessity of heart-felt religion, of experimental and practical piety, just as zealously and successfully as it can be done in the pulpit, and at the same time much more systematically and efficiently? The fact is, heresies of all kinds spring up from the corrupt pool of human depravity, are fostered in the school of ignorance, and strengthened and perpetuated by prejudice and pride; and therefore the most effectual way to guard against them is to imbue the mind with sound learning, to have the heart purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit, and to keep up a constant obedience to all the commandments of God.

But I intimated that if "Methodism be religion without philosophy," if he meant by Methodism, as I suppose he did, pure religion, in distinction from all other systems of religion, then it follows of necessity that until Methodism arose pure religion had no existence. If this be its distinguishing feature, its characteristic peculiarity, by which it is distinguished from all other denominations, it follows inevitably that all others have religion *with* philosophy;

and hence it follows, with equal conclusiveness, that until Methodism arose there was no pure religion in the world; that until this "religion without philosophy" made its appearance, under the guise of Methodism, all other *isms* were poisoned with the foreign admixture of philosophy; and this therefore alone purified the corrupt mass, and presented the religion of the Lord Jesus in a pure, unadulterated state.

So far therefore from turning aside, or "flying off in a tangent," with a view to smite unjustly "a certain writer," and thereby giving evidence that I had lost my balance, as P. has represented me as having done, I think that in defining Methodism differently from him I pursued a straightforward course, and finding that stumbling-block in my path, it was incumbent on me to remove it out of the way, lest others should stumble over it into the pit of error. Nor can I perceive that I have drawn an illogical conclusion from the assumed apothegm that "Methodism is religion without philosophy," namely, that if this be so, then there was no true religion until Methodism arose, with its healing balm, to eradicate from human souls the spiritual disease with which they were afflicted—that if neither its doctrines nor peculiar mode of operation, class-meetings, itinerancy, nor its organization, form any part of its characteristic peculiarity, it has nothing left but a floating idea, not having even the meager form of philosophy to cover its nakedness.

These inferences appear to me perfectly legiti-

mate, as much so as the following:—There can be no religion of the heart of that man whose life contravenes the commandments of God; but G, who professes this religion, contravenes the commandments of God; therefore G is deceived, having no religion of the heart.

Let us try it.

There can be no pure religion *with* philosophy; but all the systems of religion were mixed with philosophy until Methodism arose, which is “religion without philosophy;” therefore there was no pure religion until Methodism arose to purify it from philosophy.

If there be any flaw in this argument I cannot perceive it. And the major and minor propositions are contained in the piece in the Methodist Quarterly Review. The conclusion is mine, which inevitably follows from the premises.

I thought it my duty, therefore, and still think so, to remove the flimsy veil under which the erroneous definition was hidden, and to unravel the sophistry by which it was defended, and thus to present the truth without a mask to the reader, that Methodism might appear with all its substantial forms, adorned with all its lovely features, resting upon the foundation of solid doctrines, clothed with a garment of pure philosophy, and actuated by a living soul, breathing the breath of life infused into it by the “inspiration of the Almighty”—that thus exhibiting a living, moving form, beautified by the graces of the Holy Spirit, its “faith’s capacity stretched

wider and yet wider still," it may be seen even now marching forward in its career of usefulness, while its symmetrical proportions may be scanned by the impartial beholder, and still be adhered to according to its intrinsic excellence, and its saving power, and holy influence, felt and experienced far and wide.

If I have succeeded, as I cannot but flatter myself that I have, in my main design, let the reader thank God, who, I humbly trust, has enlightened the understanding and assisted the pen of his unworthy servant, and be encouraged to persevere in the "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope," believing that God has not yet forsaken this plant of His own right hand planting, but that it still flourishes under His fostering care, like a fruitful vine, in the garden of the Lord. Let him above all things strive so to live that he may give no occasion to the enemies of Methodism, that is, pure Christianity, to blaspheme that worthy name by which he has been called.

No. II.

No good perceived from the personal coming of Christ ; though, if this were plainly revealed, we ought to believe it nevertheless—No such fact revealed—Examination of those texts generally relied on—Do not prove the fact—If he were thus to come, it would be as a man ; of course his personal appearance must be restricted to a particular place—Hence he could profit comparatively but few at a time—These difficulties overcome by his spiritual manifestation—This answers all the ends of his intercession—In this way he can accomplish a great work in a short time—The character of the millennium—Not all righteous—Proved from Daniel xii, 10, and Rev. xx, 8-10—Gog and Magog, what—During the period of Millennial glory some remain wicked—More important to have the heart right than our mere speculations.

As to the personal reign of the Lord Jesus on this earth, I can see no good to be accomplished by it, though this, I grant, is not a sufficient reason for its rejection ; because many things are predicted, the reasons for which far surpassed the comprehension of the human mind, while their fulfilment demonstrated the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and developed their fitness by the coming to pass of the events themselves. If, therefore, this were a plain matter of fact, unequivocally declared in the word of God, that Jesus Christ should come in his own proper person to reign among men, we should be compelled to receive it as an article of faith, however mysterious it might appear, and however much it might be beyond the depths of human reason to fathom. But I find no such unequivocal revelation, either in the character of a prediction or

a declared fact; and therefore those who profess to believe it are forced to deduce it from doubtful symbols, from predictions which will easily admit of a different interpretation, or by those uncertain inferences on which we may or may not rely, according to the probability of the data on which they are founded.

The only text that I know of which seems to speak of this personal appearing of the Lord Jesus, to set up his kingdom on this earth, is that in Acts i, 11, in which it is stated that “two men,”—whether celestial or terrestrial messengers we know not, though most probably the former, being angels of God sent to instruct the disciples, whose doubtful minds hung trembling in the balance between hope and fear—“stood by them in shining apparel, which said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” This text, however, is so far from being an unequivocal proof of the doctrine of Christ’s personal appearance on this earth, where he will reign a thousand years, that the generality of commentators believe that it refers to his coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the world—a truth most clearly revealed in numerous places in the Holy Scriptures. It is much safer, therefore, to be content with these plain and unequivocal declarations of divine revelation respecting the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world at the last day, than it is to resort to any

forced or mystical interpretation of those solemn predictions which relate to future events, and which are, to make the most of them, but of a doubtful character.

I said that I could see no good to be accomplished by the personal appearance of Christ among men. If He were thus to appear, it must be as a man, and he must associate with men, as he did in the days of his incarnation ; must be located, for the time being, to a particular place, and could therefore only be seen and heard by comparatively few people at one and the same time. Hence he could profit but comparatively few with his personal presence at a time, and therefore it would consume a long period for him to travel all over the world, for the purpose of showing himself to all its inhabitants ; and although the news of his having come might, and doubtless would, spread rapidly from city to city, and from one country to the other, yet this would not satisfy the curiosity of men, nor produce that immediate conviction of its truth necessary to effect a change of heart, and the consequent reformation of life. Many doubts would be raised in one place respecting the truth of the reports in another, and a long time would elapse before they were removed, either by the personal presence of the Saviour himself, or those evidences of the fact essential to produce conviction. All these things seem naturally to arise out of the actual state of things, considered in reference to the constitution of the human mind.

If it be said that all these obstacles may be over-

come by the operation of his Spirit upon the human heart, and by sending His messengers in every direction upon the face of the earth, for the purpose of proclaiming the fact that Jesus Christ had actually appeared; it is answered, that all this can be done just as effectually while He is seated at the right hand of God, as it could be on the supposition of his being personally among men. This, in fact, is done—the Spirit is sent everywhere, to enlighten every understanding, to penetrate every heart, to arouse every conscience, to help the infirmities of all God's people in prayer, and praise, and in the performance of every good word and work: God's ministers—those who have an inward consciousness of His presence, and therefore speak under the dictates of the Holy Spirit—are sent out in every direction, for the purpose of proclaiming the fact, not indeed that Jesus Christ has appeared personally on this earth, but that He is risen from the dead, and that He now liveth at the right hand of God, where He is ever making intercession for us. Here, then, we have all the purposes for which the advocates for the personal reign of Christ plead, as the consequence of his thus appearing, fully accomplished by his spiritual manifestation, and by the methods he has adopted, and does still adopt, for the propagation of his Gospel among the nations of the earth. While, if He were personally to appear—assume a human form—which he unquestionably must do if he make a visible manifestation of himself—he must restrict himself to one particular place

at a time, and thus adopt the slow process of traveling from city to city, and from one country to another, in order to make himself known to all the inhabitants of our world. By adopting the method we have supposed, and which he has actually adopted, namely, the spiritual manifestation of himself to the understandings and consciences of all men, he can accomplish a great work in a short time. And, then, by raising up, inspiring, and sending forth his messengers everywhere, to proclaim him as the living God, to whom all things are committed,—these, confirming the truth which the “Spirit writes on all truly awakened hearts,” will co-operate together for the speedy salvation of the world.

This, it appears to me, is the way in which God will usher in the glorious millennium. “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Many are running to and fro; the number of faithful missionaries is increasing, and they are going forth in different parts of the world, “proclaiming salvation in Jesus’ name;” and, as a consequence, knowledge—the knowledge of forgiveness of sins by faith in Jesus Christ—is everywhere increasing. Thus the new covenant which God promised to establish with his people, namely, that he would “write his law upon their hearts, and imprint it upon their inward parts; so that they should all know him, from the least unto the greatest,” is even now opening, expanding, and being accomplished in all its power and glory; so that very soon we shall no longer be under the necessity of “saying one to the other,

Know the Lord; for they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest."

And that this is to be understood in general terms, not literally, is manifest from various passages of sacred Scripture. Thus, in Daniel xii, 10, where the prophet is evidently speaking of the latter day glory, and of the end of time, it is said, "Many shall be purified and made white, and be tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand." These words certainly indicate that when the Lord shall establish His kingdom upon the earth, by the purifying process of his Spirit, by which many "shall be made white" "in the blood of the Lamb," there shall be wicked men mingling with the righteous, who, in resisting the operations of his Spirit upon their consciences, will become more and more hardened in sin, and hence will continue to do wickedly, will wax "worse and worse," until they become so blinded that they cannot "understand" either the judgments or mercies of Almighty God.

So also in Rev. xx, 7-10, it is said, "When the thousand years are expired," which all allow is a prediction of the end of the millennium, "Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand upon the sea. And they went up upon the breadth of the land, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down

from God out of heaven, and consumed them. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Gog and Magog appear to be mentioned here as a personification of the wicked inhabitants which will be found upon the earth at the close of the millennial period, and whom God shall destroy with the breath of his mouth, or consign them over to the devil and his angels, to be tormented forever and ever in the lake of fire, whence the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up without end." Now, if every individual person were really righteous during the thousand years of Christ's reign upon earth, whence came this mighty army of His enemies, represented as being as numerous as the "sand of the sea," and who will exemplify their enmity by encamping around the saints, with a view, no doubt, to destroy them? It is hardly to be supposed that such a multitude would suddenly apostatize from the faith, and turn open enemies to the gospel of Christ; such determined enemies as to fight against them, with a view to exterminate them from the face of the earth. To suppose that such an immense multitude, who had actually tasted that the Lord is gracious, had beheld His glory unveiled to their souls, and had beheld his person visibly manifested to their bodily eyes, should suddenly renounce his authority, abjure his religion, and blaspheme his holy Name, and, as a consequence, join affinity with his enemies, is to suppose a phenome-

non in the religious world far beyond any comparison in the history of the Church, and totally unaccountable on either the principles of Divine revelation, or of human nature, as mutable and perverse as it unquestionably is.

It is much more rational, therefore, as well as agreeable to the analogy of things, and in accordance with the declarations of God's word, to believe that during all that period of millennial glory, there were some that remained "blinded by the god of this world;" that by the evil influence of their example the number of the wicked gradually increased; continually resisting the light of Divine truth, they "waxed worse and worse," corrupted and corrupting each other; until, finally, they became so numerous, and so maddened in their folly, as to suppose they might overcome the saints of God; and hence they are represented as encamping around them, when God appears to vindicate his own cause and people, and hurls his vengeance on his enemies, by casting them, and the devil who deceived them, into the bottomless pit.

These are some of the reasons for the doctrine contained in the text, and they appear fully sufficient to warrant the belief that the millennium for which we are to look is such a one as therein described, and no other. Those, however, who think differently are at full liberty to enjoy their opinion, provided only they will allow the same liberty to me and others who think fit to dissent from them, for the reasons above assigned.

After all, it is a matter of much more importance to have our hearts right in the sight of God, than it is to be accurate in our views respecting a mere speculative point of such a character as the one herein discussed. While I entertain no doubt of the correctness of my opinion on this subject, I am perfectly willing that others should enjoy theirs unmolestedly.

No. III.

Population of the World.

Asia.....	570,000,000
Europe	280,000,000
Africa	90,000,000
South America.....	14,000,000
North America.....	28,000,000
Oceanica.....	18,000,000
	1,000,000,000

Estimated division of the Religious Denominations.

Pagans	630,000,000
Mohammedans	100,000,000
Greek Church	56,000,000
Armenians and Jews.....	14,000,000
Roman Catholics	130,000,000
Protestants	70,000,000
	1,000,000,000

NOTE. The above is not set down as perfectly accurate, but approximates as near the truth as can well be ascertained from the various documents which I have consulted. And from this statement of the religious condition of the world, we may see the great work to be accomplished before “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the great deep.”

Statistics of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The following table will show the number, together with the increase or decrease, from year to year, of ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from the time of the first Conference held in America, in the year 1773; and likewise the per centum of increase and decrease, as well as the average per centum for the whole seventy-six years. The number of travelling preachers includes the supernumerary and superannuated as well as effective.

NOTE.—In this table the numerous errors which have crept into the printed Minutes have been carefully corrected, so that those who compare the results here brought out with those in the Minutes, will find a discrepancy in many places; though it is probable that errors may still be detected, notwithstanding the endeavour to be accurate.

Year.	Preachers.	Members.	Increase.	Decrease.	Per cent. of inc. and dec.
1773	10	1,160			
1774	17	2,073	913		79
1775	19	3,148	1,075		52
1776	24	4,921	1,773		56
1777	36	6,968	2,047		42
1778	29	6,095		873	13
1779	49	8,577	2,482	73	41
1780	42	8,504			nearly 1
1781	54	10,539	2,025		
1782	59	11,785	1,246		12
1783	83	13,740	1,955		17
1784	83	14,988	1,248		9
1785	104	18,000	3,012		20

After this year the white and coloured members were returned in separate columns, and then the whole were added together to make the sum total, which method will be followed hereafter.

Year.	Prohrs.	Whites.	Colour'd.	Total.	Increase.	Decre.	Per cent. of increase & decrease.
1786	117	19,791	1,890	20,681	2,681		15
1787	133	21,949	3,893	25,842	5,161		25
1788	166	30,899	6,545	37,354	11,512		45
1789	196	35,019	8,243	43,262	5,908		16
1790	227	45,949	11,682	57,631	14,369		33
1791	259	50,385	12,884	63,269	5,639		10
1792	266	52,109	13,871	65,980	2,711		4
1793	269	51,416	16,227	67,643	1,663		3
1794	301	52,794	13,814	66,608		1,035	2
1795	313	48,121	12,170	60,291		6,317	9
1796	293	45,384	11,280	56,664		3,627	6
1797	262	46,444	12,218	58,663	1,999		4
1798	267	47,867	12,302	60,169	1,506		3
1799	272	49,115	12,236	61,351	1,182		2
1800	287	51,442	12,452	64,894	3,543		6
1801	307	57,186	15,688	72,874	7,980		12
1802	358	68,075	18,659	86,784	13,860		10
1803	383	81,617	22,453	104,070	17,336		19
1804	400	89,603	23,531	113,134	9,064		9
1805	433	95,629	24,316	119,945	6,811		6
1806	452	103,313	27,257	130,570	10,625		9
1807	516	114,727	29,863	144,590	14,020		11
1808	540	121,687	30,308	151,995	7,405		5
1809	597	131,154	31,884	163,038	11,043		8
1810	636	139,836	34,724	174,560	11,522		7
1811	668	148,835	35,732	184,567	10,007		6
1812	678	156,852	38,505	195,357	10,790		6
1813	700	171,448	42,859	214,307	18,950		9
1814	687	168,698	42,434	211,129		3,178	2
1815	704	167,978	43,187	211,165	36		$\frac{1}{60}$
1816	695	171,931	42,304	214,235	3,070		1
1817	716	181,442	43,411	224,858	10,518		5
1818	748	190,477	39,150	229,627	4,774		2
1819	812	201,750	39,174	240,924	11,297		5
1820	896	219,332	40,558	259,890	18,966		8
1821	977	339,087	42,059	281,146	21,256		8
1822	1,106	252,645	44,377	297,022	15,876		6
1823	1,226	267,618	44,922	312,540	15,518		5
1824	1,272	289,427	48,096	328,523	15,983		5
1825	1,314	298,658	49,537	347,195	19,672		6
1826	1,406	309,550	51,334	360,889	12,680		4
1827	1,576	327,933	54,065	381,997	21,113		6

Year.	Prechrs.	Whites.	Coloured.	Total.	Increase.	Decre.	Per cent. of dec. & inc.
1828	1,642	359,533	59,394*	418,927	36,930		10
1829	1,817	382,679	65,064	447,743	39,816		10
1830	1,900	402,561	73,592	476,153	28,410		6
1831	2,010	437,024	76,090	513,114	36,961		8
1832	2,200	472,364	76,229	548,595	35,470		7
1833	2,400	519,196	80,540	599,736	51,143		9
1834	2,625	553,134	85,650	638,784	39,048		7
1835	2,758	566,957	85,571	652,528	13,744		2
1836	2,920	564,974	85,271	650,245		2,283	$\frac{1}{2}$

This year, and the subsequent years, the numbers of local preachers were returned in the Minutes, and they are accordingly set down in a separate column in the years which follow :—

Year	T. Pr.	L. Pr.	Whites.	Coloured	Total.	Increase.	Decrease.	Per cent
1837	3,147	4,954	570,123	79,670	654,756†	4,511		$\frac{2}{3}$
1838	3,332	5,792	615,212	81,337	702,332	47,576		7
1839	3,557	5,856	650,357	90,192	746,315	43,983		6
1840	3,687	6,339	698,777	96,668	801,784	55,469		7
1841	3,865	6,893	748,442	104,476	859,811	58,027		7
1842	4,044	7,144	803,988	109,313	921,045	61,234		7
1843	4,286	7,730	936,736	131,789	1,076,255	155,210		17
1844	4,627	8,087	1,021,818	145,409	1,175,314	99,059		9
1845	4,828	8,109	985,698	153,889	1,147,696		27,618	2
1846	3,280	4,985	613,125	31,174	649,344		498,352‡	43
1847	3,642	4,913	600,941	30,617	636,471		12,873	2
1848	3,471	5,191	608,917	30,088	644,196	8,735		1
1849	3,984	5,154	632,773	29,542	667,469	23,273		4

Average per cent. of increase $9\frac{1}{2}$.

Add the number of travelling preachers to that of the members for the year 1849, and we have a total of 671,453.

* The numbers of Christian Indians are included in this and the subsequent numbers of coloured members.

† The number of local preachers is included in the sum total.

‡ This great decrease is owing to the secession of the slave-holding conferences.

General Summary.

Number in the Methodist Episcopal Church, including travelling preachers.....	671,453
Number in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, including travelling and local preachers..	496,586
Number in the Wesleyan Connexion in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Missionary Stations...	470,011
Number in the Canada Conference.....	24,268
	1,662,318

Add to these the following, who have seceded from us in this country and in Europe, namely :—

The Primitives and others in Great Britain and Ireland.....	200,000*
Methodist Protestants.....	64,313
Reformed Methodists	3,000
Wesleyan Methodists.....	20,000
Grand total.....	1,949,631

* I am not certain that this number is accurate, as I have not been able to find any authentic document to verify it, though I judge it not far from the truth.

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